

# LIVING-IN.EU

## Living-in.eu Capacity Building Workshop: Needs assessment of the Capacity building programme

7 February 2023, 10 – 11:30 am CET

[MIRO Board](#)

### REPORT

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## Purpose and scope of the workshop

On 7 February 2023, the [Living-in.EU Education & Capacity Building Workshop: Needs assessment of the Capacity building programme](#) took place online via the Microsoft Teams channel.

The workshop was meant to present the *Working Plan of the Living-in.EU Education & Capacity building sub-group* for 2023 and to scope the needs of the wider Living-in.EU community in terms of improving digital skills on digital transformation.

The workshop is part of the activities of the *Education & Capacity Building sub-group*<sup>1</sup> of the Living-in.EU initiative. Led by the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL)<sup>2</sup>, this sub-group focuses on solutions for the needed skills to boost digital transformation in cities and communities, and methods to leverage this. The *Education & Capacity Building Annual Workplan 2023* of this sub-group is displayed in Table 2.

## Living-in.EU Capacity Building Programme in a nutshell

The **Living-in.EU** "Join, Boost, Sustain" Declaration invites European decision-makers of EU cities and communities to bring the economic and social benefits of the digital transformation to all local communities and implement an inclusive digital Europe, with powerful digital services, technologies, infrastructures and skills.

Within this context, Go Li.EU aims to make Living-in.EU a platform for knowledge exchange, capacity building and mutual learning on the digital transformation of European cities, communities and regions. The starting point for this work is to identify the needs of all actors engaged in the community and to make an inventory of all relevant materials. To match these needs, Go Li.EU will detect and collect capacity building tools from existing projects and initiatives the consortium partners and their members are involved in (e.g. DT4REGIONS, AI Watch, DG DIGIT Interoperability Academy, CommuniCity, DS4SSCC, etc.) aligned to the Living-in.EU objectives and therefore contributing to the digital 'maturity' of our community. In addition, based on the needs identified by the community as not yet addressed by other initiatives, ad-hoc materials and activities will be developed and made available through the Living-in.EU platform.

### Specific objectives of the Capacity Building Programme:

- To ensure mutual learning through interactive learning sessions for Living-in.EU signatories.
- To enrich the community by sharing content related to good practices and use cases.
- To increase the uptake of cross-domain interoperable digital solutions, such as local data platforms, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered local digital twins.
- To enhance the widespread uptake of easy-to-use digital assets.
- To develop and disseminate capacity building materials on digital technologies, potential use and best practices from successful digital transformation in cities.

### Concrete outcomes of the Living-in.EU Capacity Building Programme:

- 4 video webinars on AI & big data technologies.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://living-in.eu/groups/commitments/education-capacity-building>

<sup>2</sup> <https://enoll.org/>

- 4 workshops sharing best practices (aligned to Open Living Lab Days ENoLL Flagship event).
- 2 interactive sessions for debating digital transformation within public administrations.
- 4 open debates between community of the Action-oriented Task Force on Social Impact of AI of ENoLL, cities and regions, on the future of AI & big data in public management.
- 2 training sessions on funding opportunities (e.g., access to the Digital Europe Programme, optimisation of synergies between EU, national and local funds, and/or how to strengthen investment in local digital transformation from EU funds and programmes).

## Agenda of the workshop

The event was hosted via the online platform Microsoft Teams and gathered 41 participants (70 registered to the event) from municipalities of European cities and regions, as well as policy makers, academia, and industries. Among those registered, there were 12 signatories and 15 supporters of the Living-In.EU declaration. Moreover, around 20 of the registrants represented cities, 7 regions and 3 countries. As part of the workshop, a 1-hour interactive session was held to enable the participants to exchange their capacity building needs in the digital transformation field, focusing on 1) *Challenges, Fields and Barriers for deploying Digital Transformation*, 2) *Capacity Building Topics*, 3) *Connection with other initiatives*. The inputs of the participants were collected via a Miro board<sup>3</sup> – still open at this link<sup>3</sup> for further inputs.

Table 1 - Agenda of the workshop

Agenda Point	Time	Speakers
Welcome & objectives of the session	10.00-10.05	Francesca Spagnoli – Head of Projects & Capacity Building at ENoLL
Living-in.EU initiative and strategic objectives	10.05-10.10	Gabriela Ruseva, GO Li.EU Project Coordinator, EURO CITIES
Living-in.EU Education & Capacity Building Programme & Sub-Group Workplan 2023	10.10-10.20	Francesca Spagnoli – Head of Projects & Capacity Building at ENoLL
Q&A and comments from the audience	10.20-10.25	Participants from the audience
Interactive Session: Scoping the Capacity Building Needs of the Living-in.EU Community	10.25-11.25	Session moderated by Francesca Spagnoli & Martina Desole + Contributors from the different subgroups - Exercise 1: Challenges, Fields and Barriers for deploying Digital Transformation (15 mins) - Exercise 2: Capacity Building Topics (15 mins) - Exercise 3 Connection with other initiatives (15 mins) - Report on results (5 mins each)
Wrapping and conclusion	11.25-11.30	Francesca Spagnoli – Head of Projects & Capacity Building at ENoLL

<sup>3</sup> [https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVPy1Zwxg=](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVPy1Zwxg=/)

## The Annual Workplan 2023 of the Education & Capacity Building

The Education & Capacity Building Subgroup aims to support European cities and regions and their 4-helix stakeholders to develop new digital skills on citizen-centric design and digital transformation by developing a culture of co-creative, participative and cross-sector approaches to designing and implementing smart and sustainable local solutions.

### Summary of the objectives for 2023

- In the first 4 months we will focus on developing a clear strategy for the development, deployment and uptake of cross-domain interoperable digital solutions, including the collection of needs for the Capacity Building Programme.
- The remaining months of 2023 will be devoted to ensuring mutual learning through interactive learning sessions for Living-in.EU signatories.
- This will culminate in an inventory of tools (knowledge, best practices and resources) of Go Li.EU, which will be available through the Living-in.EU platform by December 2023 as a living repository.

### Potential connection with the other sub-groups

Collaboration with other sub-groups will be pivotal to produce, collect and publish Capacity building tools and case studies from different sectors for the Living-in.EU community. More in detail, the technical, legal and finance sub-groups will be invited to contribute to the meetings of the Education & Capacity Building sub-group mainly addressing the Living-in.EU signatories with the aim to translate technical language into a successful adoption of public services for the Technical and Legal sub-groups and to support public administrations to get access to funds, as linked with the work of the Finance sub-group.

### Main activities & goals of the Education & Capacity Building sub-group

Table 2 presents the activities dedicated to the members of the sub-group, while the activities of the Capacity Building Programme listed above (*“Concrete outcomes of the Living-in.EU Capacity Building Programme”*) will be organised but for the broader community of Living-in.EU, including other cities and regions, supporting companies, research institutes, universities, associations, and any other relevant actors. The activities presented in the table have been envisaged on the basis of the outcomes of this and previous dedicated workshops, which had the specific objective of capturing the capacity building needs of the present and potential members of the sub-group.

Table 2 - Main activities & goals of the Capacity Building sub-group

Activity	Purpose of activity	Goals	Link to the other sub-groups	Scheduled	Concrete results	Activity leader
Capacity Building Workshop	Capacity Building	Assessing the needs of the community	All subgroups will be involved	Q1 – Feb 2023	Report on Capacity Building needs	ENoLL
1st sub-group meeting	Increasing skills of public administrations on user involvement in design DT	User involvement in the design, development and use of public services – webinar (focused on Digital twins & Data Spaces + case studies	Technical – link from technical to adoption of public services	Q1 – Apr 2023	Video training to be uploaded on the Li.EU website	ENoLL
Chair elections	Sustain the subgroup	Elect a chair and co-chair for the subgroups	Signatories	Q2	Chair & co-chairs identified	ENoLL
2nd sub-group meeting	Pulling together different funding resources and level of implementation	Support public administration to get access to funding	Finance	Q2 – Jun 2023	Guidelines for signatories - slide deck	ENoLL
3rd sub-group meeting	Assessing & reviewing the inventory of tools of Go Li.EU in draft version	Knowledge & best practices sharing, improvement of resources	All subgroups	Q3 – Nov 23	Finalisation of the inventory tools and repository	ENoLL
Evaluation of work plan 2023	Monitoring	Assess the results achieved and propose mitigation measures for 2024	Monitoring subgroup	Q3 – Dec 2023		ENoLL

## Q&A and comments from the audience

**KALOGIROU Victoria (DIGIT):** DG DIGIT has created a proposed framework for digital administration capacity building for interoperability, to define which profiles linking to what capacity are needed. This capacity building framework and related trainings include profiles for the local level, mayors, towns etc.

**COLINET Christophe (City of Bordeaux)** flags a specific concern regarding the learning for the social workers in touch with people who cannot access their rights because they have no digital skills in order to do so.

**Francesca Spagnoli – ENOLL:** The idea is that for the ones that are going to participate in the Education & Capacity Building sub-group, a smaller meeting with the participants, mainly from the cities and regions and representatives of the Member States (the Living-in.EU signatories), will be organised. There participants can also share their knowledge throughout the year.

## Interactive Session: Scoping the Capacity Building Needs of the Living-in.EU Community

### Challenges, Fields of work and Barriers to deploying Digital Transformation

In the first phase of the interactive session, three blocks of exercises were proposed to participants, and 15 to 20 minutes were dedicated to each exercise.

The first exercise was focused on the challenges, and it built upon the work carried out in the past few years. In fact, on 31 March 2022, a joint workshop of the DT4Regions and Living-in.EU Capacity Building Program started to collect the needs of the Community and to build together cities and regions' perspectives, especially for employees working at the municipalities. In the Miro board, some posts-it reported the results of this previous work in terms of the most relevant challenges that public authorities from cities and regions were facing while developing digital transformation strategies, as well as fields of work they would like to concentrate on and barriers for deploying digital transformation.

Participants were asked, in the first instance, to identify and add any missing elements compared to those reported from previous meetings. Secondly, they were asked to vote on which elements to give priority to in the sub-group, by attributing stars on the corresponding post-it notes.

### First block: Challenges

Regarding the challenges, these are mainly related to the design and delivery of digital public services and the ethical use of data, but also to making local government more open and transparent, especially in the public procurement processes, while supporting interconnection with the citizens. Also, creating a digital identity for citizens, and carrying out public management with the use and analysis of data for decision-making were spotted as issues. Overall, the main challenge to working with big data volumes is considered not to be at the technical level, but rather at the social level (Fig. 1).

Figure 1 - Challenges: DT4REGIONS & Living-in.EU joint workshop results

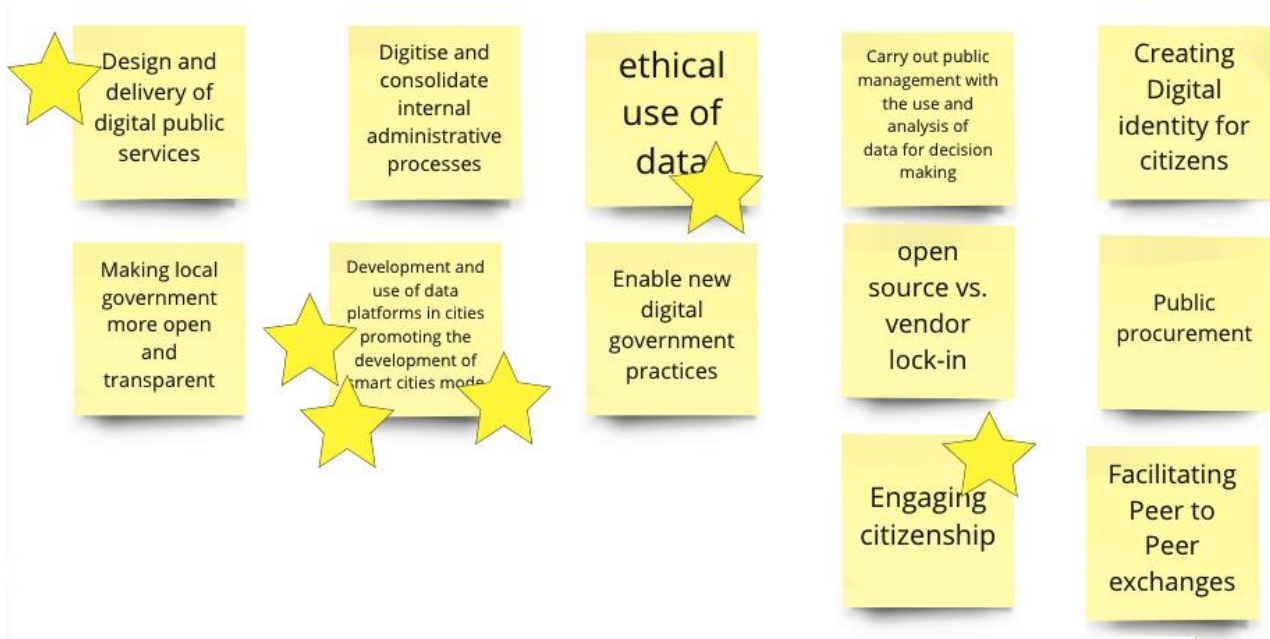
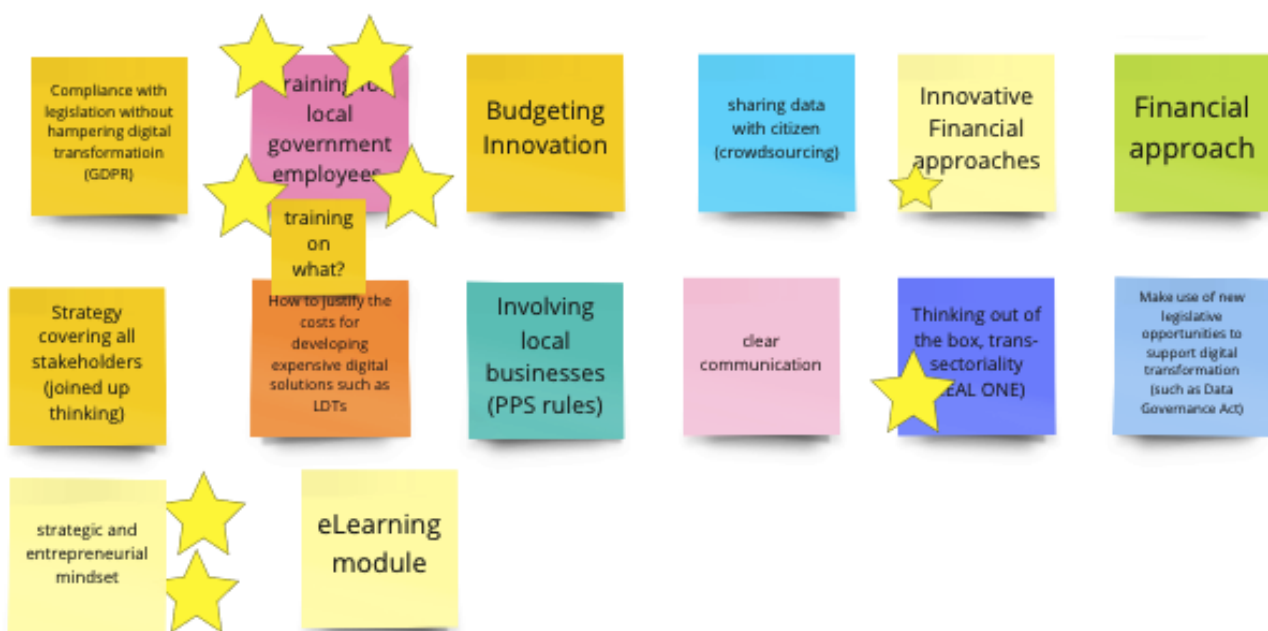


Figure 2 - Challenges: elements added by participants



Participants were asked to add what is missing (Fig. 2). Several challenges relate to financial issues like funding, budget for innovation processes and how to identify new innovative financial approaches to be implemented into the public administrations. The second point is how to engage with citizenship, which was already highlighted in previous assessments.

Engaging citizenship also means involving them in an interactive and attractive way, meaning that policymakers and officers need to think out of the box, for example how to share data with citizens in a way that they can understand. Also, training for local government employees is needed to enable them to properly interact with citizens on these topics. In this sense, it's important to give them quick and relevant learning models so that they can combine the daily work with the learning of new approaches and have further capacity building for being able to interact with citizens.



The most voted challenges were:

- training for local government employees
- development and use of data platforms in cities.

Second block: the fields of work (topics)

When assessing the capacity building needs in the workshop of last year (Fig. 3), Digital Twins was the most selected topic together with the data spaces, while also the data ethics part is considered essential for regions and cities in order to have more information in terms of capacity.

There were also a few topics about cybersecurity, mobility and logistics, pre-commercial and public procurement.

Figure 3 - Fields of work: DT4REGIONS & Living-in.EU joint workshop results

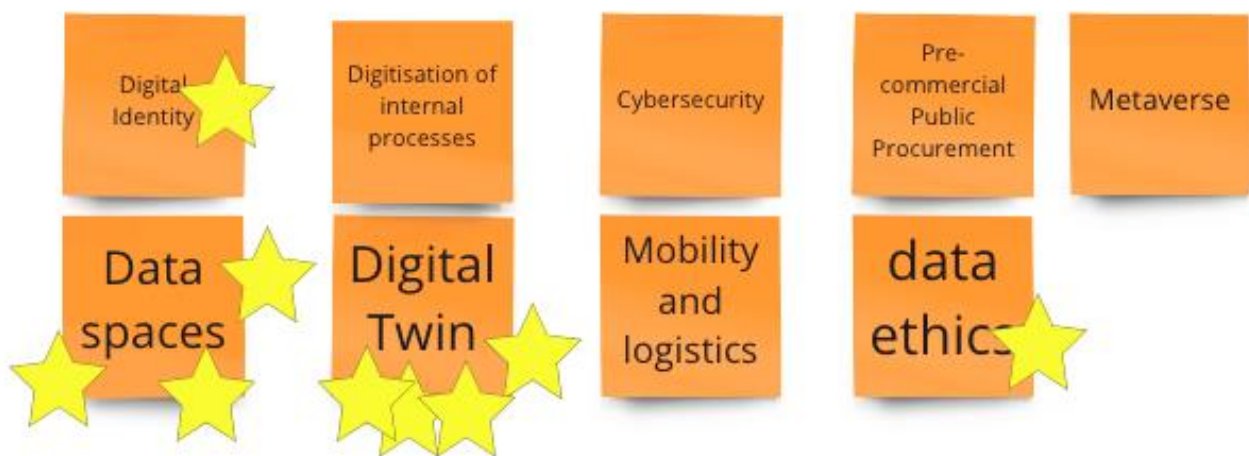
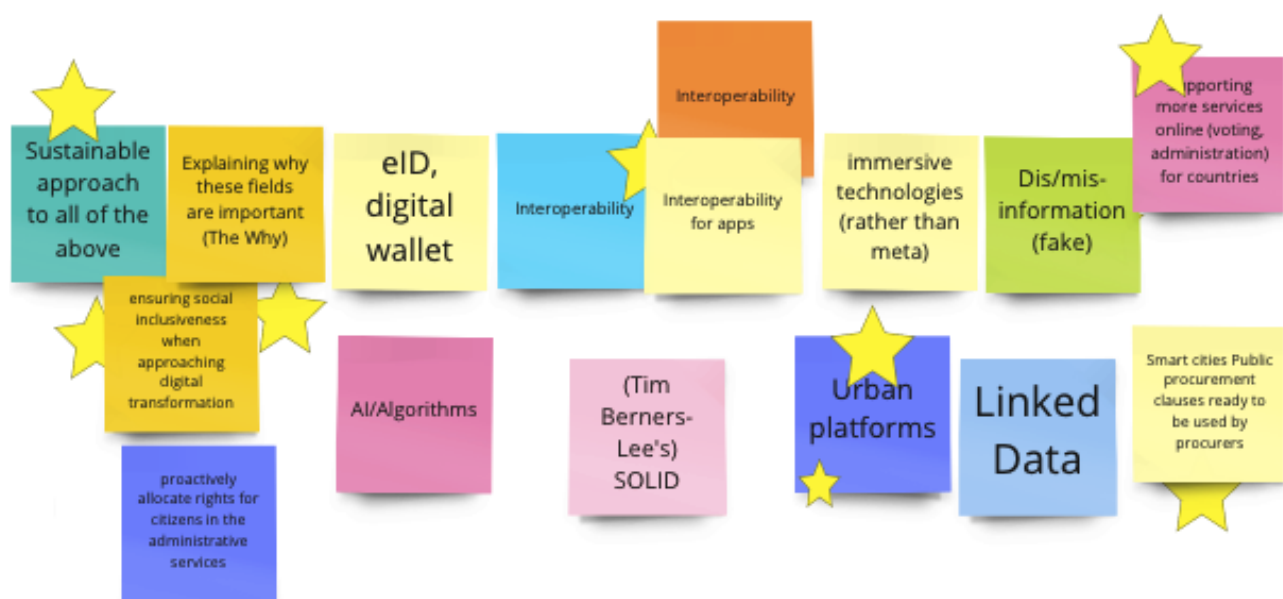


Figure 4 - Fields of work: elements added by participants





Participants were asked again to add what is missing (Fig. 4). Generally, they highlighted that it is important to work on supporting capacities for groups that typically are out of the usage of Artificial Intelligence processes, for improving co-creation with citizens. Interoperability is seen a key enabler for accelerating digital transformation of cities and communities: in this regard, this sub-group will work closely with the Technical sub-group on the Minimal Interoperability Mechanisms (MIMs)<sup>4</sup>. There was also a focus on smart cities and public procurement clauses ready to be used by procurers, an aspect that is going to be tackled by the financial subgroup.

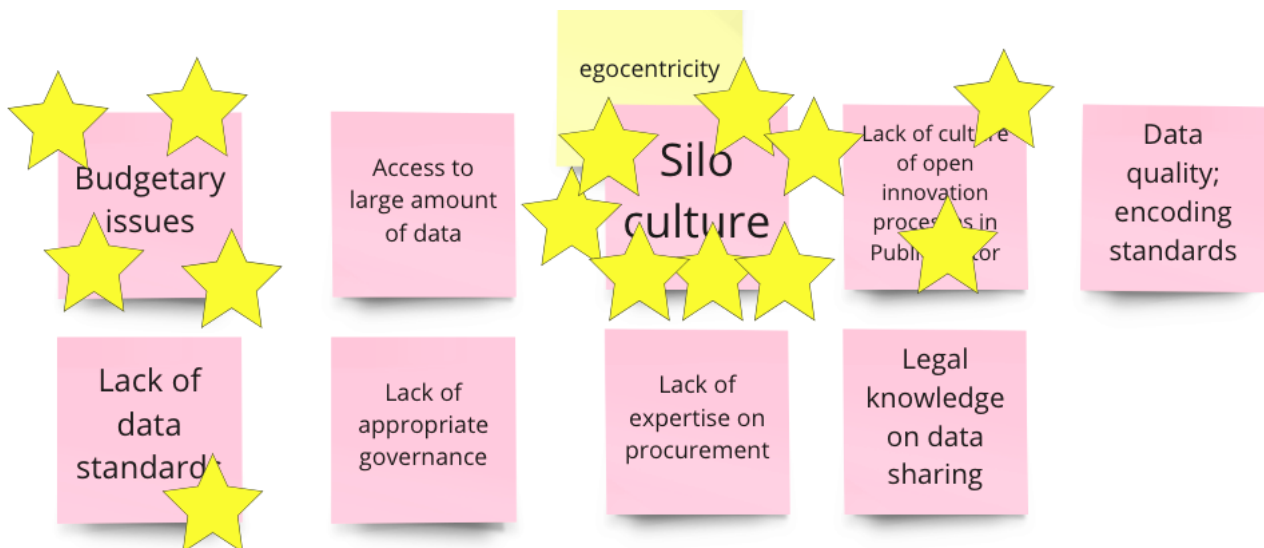
When asked to vote, participants highlighted:

- data spaces and digital twins were the most voted.
- sustainable approach for capacity building tools
- urban platforms
- data ethics and public procurement clauses.

### Third block: barriers to deploying digital transformation

Barriers can be both technical and cultural: from a cultural perspective, a quite relevant issue is that different city departments do not sufficiently communicate with each other (silo culture), preventing the correct implementation of digital transformation in public administrations. From a technical perspective, also the lack of data standards, and data quality, as well as the lack of expertise in technical and procurement processes, together with the prevented access to a large amount of data and budgetary issues, were selected as the most relevant barriers for deploying digital transformation (Fig. 5).

Figure 5 - Barriers: DT4REGIONS & Living-in.EU joint workshop results



<sup>4</sup> "Minimal Interoperability Mechanisms (MIMs) [are] a set of practical capabilities based on open technical specifications that allow cities and communities to replicate and scale solutions globally. The MIMs are developed by the OASC Technology Council and governed by the Council of Cities and the Board of Directors (...).MIMs provide the technical foundation for procurement and deployment of urban data platforms and end-to-end solutions in cities & communities worldwide". Source: <https://oascities.org/minimal-interoperability-mechanisms/>

Figure 6 - Barriers: elements added by participants



Participants were asked again to add what is missing (Fig. 6). From a cultural perspective, reluctance to change, language issues and bureaucracy were added, as well as the way public authorities communicate with the citizens in order to get their acceptance of new measures and solutions.

When looking at the technical perspective, participants highlighted the lack of awareness of existing digital solutions and enablers and also that security issues can prevent the developing of digital transformations. Also, it is important to break through the hype, i.e. identifying if and how new technologies should be implemented in each specific local context.

When asked to vote:

- the silo culture was the most voted element,
- followed by budgetary issues
- and the lack of a culture of open innovation processes in the public sector.

## Capacity Building Topics

Participants were also asked what kind of specific capacity building topics they would like to see in three of the five subgroups<sup>5</sup> of Living-in.EU (legal, finance, technical) plus regarding the cross-cutting topic of user-centric co-creation of digital solutions. These are reported in the four tables below:

Figure 7 - Capacity Building topics for citizen-centric co-creation

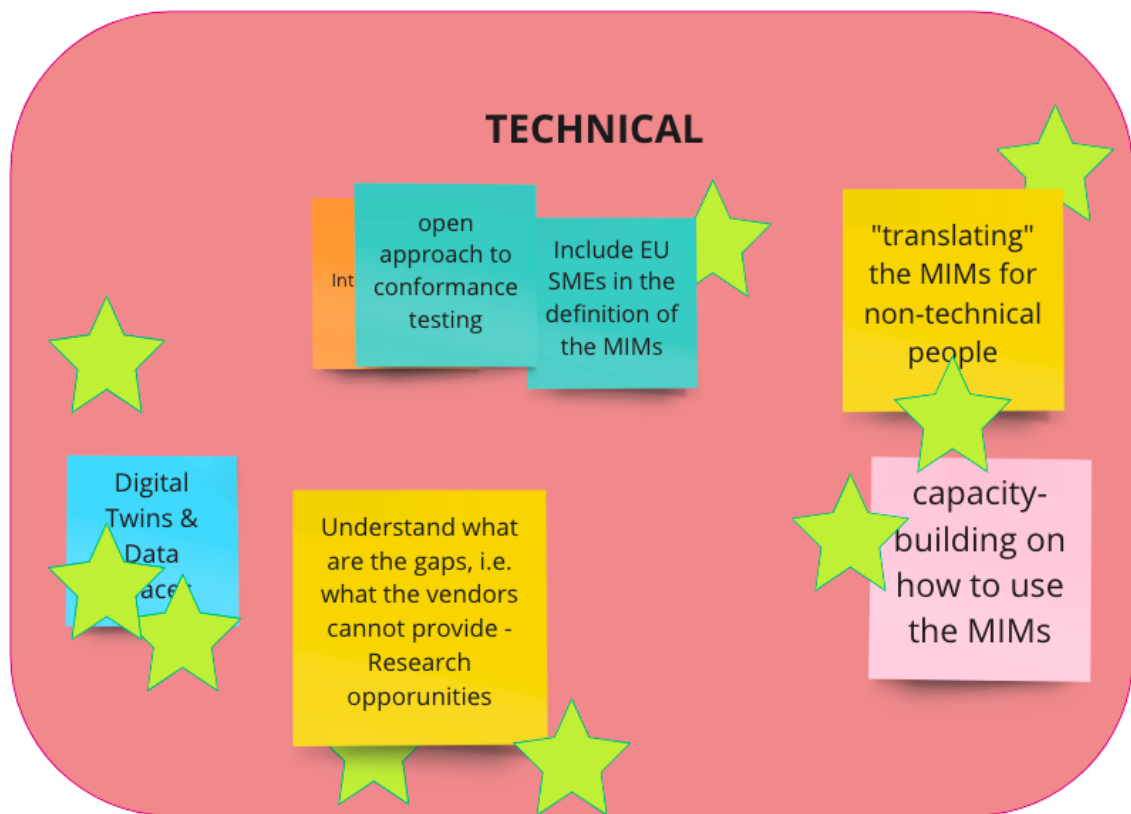


Regarding citizen-centric co-creation, the need to systematically involve users in the design, development and use of public services was underlined, as well as the need to strengthen the ability of public authorities to translate technical language into something that the public can easily understand. This can also be done through structured and repeatable processes, and the exchange of good practices.

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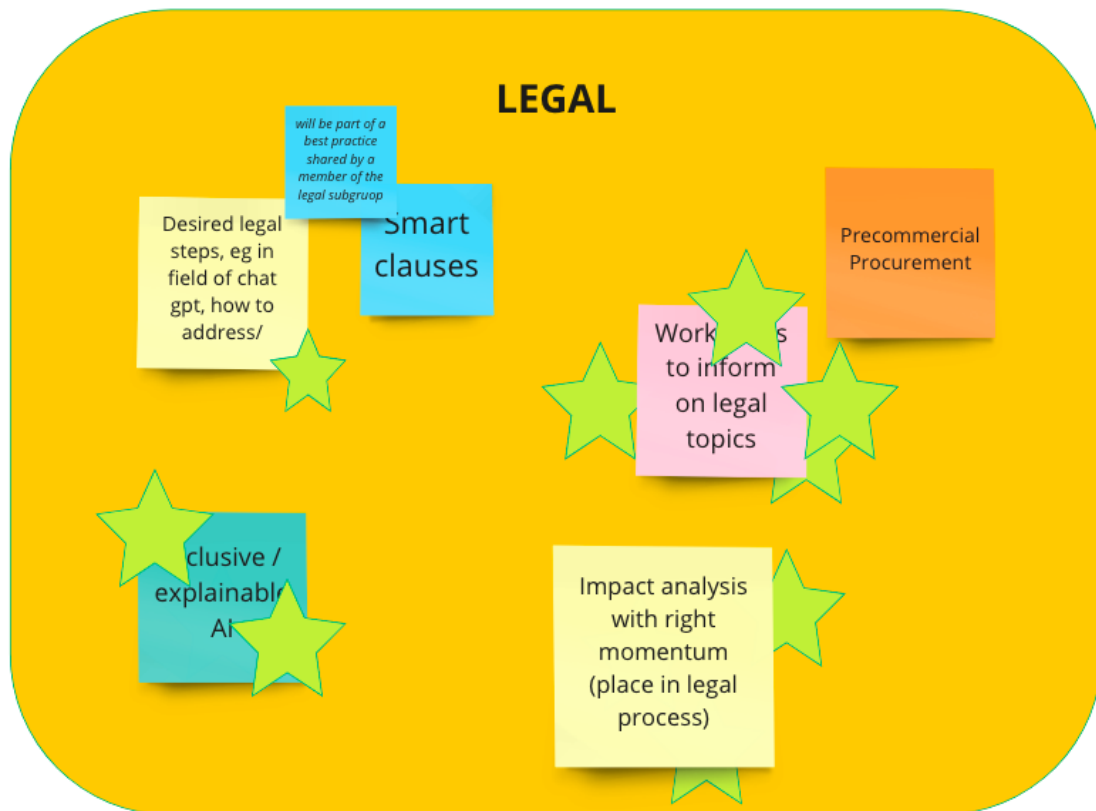
<sup>5</sup> <https://living-in.eu/groups>

Figure 8 - Capacity Building topics for technical aspects



Regarding the technical aspects, most of the comments concern the MIMs, in particular the request to provide support on how to use them, how to translate their meaning and functioning for non-technical people, and to include small and medium enterprises in their scope of action. As previously pointed out, Digital Twins and data spaces are issues that should be addressed from a technical point of view; furthermore, research opportunities should be identified to understand what the gaps are in terms of what vendors cannot provide.

Figure 9 - Capacity Building topics for legal aspects



For the legal part, smart closes should be further investigated, as well as the pre-commercial procurement and inclusive and explainable Artificial Intelligence from the legal perspective. Also, how to legally address chat GPT.

Figure 10 - Capacity Building topics for finance



As regards finance and funding, it has been highlighted how to pull together financial resources, as well as the potential of using regional funds for communities. Sharing of solutions for innovative finance and innovative business models are also aspects to be addressed. Impact scan on legal choices: many legal choices are being made in the area of digitization in Europe and then it's up to the national government to decide how to implement them. However, most of the times there's a choice on implementation, but not an availability of finance to go along with. Therefore, it is important to have a preliminary assessment of the financial consequences of a certain measure, to make sure it is feasible.

#### Other initiatives to link up with:

- DG DIGIT Interoperability Academy
- European DIGITAL SME Alliance (as representative of ICT European SMEs) to comply with co-creation provisions and requirements
- Pact for Skills (Network/WG)
- 5G smart communities - CSA platform and gathering good practices
- DEP newly funded projects
- Universities - RPO's in general
- Erasmus+ (Strategic) Partnerships
- Standardisation - <https://www.etsi.org/>; <https://www.3gpp.org/about-us>
- Universities - RPO's in general
- trebag.hu
- Erasmus+ (Strategic) Partnerships
- European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs)
- 100CNC
- LORDIMAS
- Linked with M&M Subgroup

## Implications & main takeaways

The workshop brought out crucial insights on the challenges, field of work, and barriers to be addressed for successful implementation of smart city initiatives. The participants have confirmed the significance of developing and utilizing data platforms, designing public digital services, engaging citizens, and ensuring ethical use of data. Additionally, the workshop has highlighted the need for training local government employees, promoting innovative financial approaches, strategic and entrepreneurial mindsets, and thinking out of the box.

The field of work that emerged from the workshops indicates that **Digital Twins** and **Data spaces** are critical topics, followed by **procurement**, **digital identity**, and **data ethics**. The last workshop has added new fields of work such as developing **urban data platforms**, ensuring **interoperability**, **sustainability**, and **social inclusiveness**.

The most significant barrier identified by the participants was the silo culture, followed by lack of culture of open innovation processes, budgetary constraints, and lack of data standards. The last workshop has highlighted new barriers like citizens' acceptance and lack of awareness of existing digital solutions.



It is important to address these challenges, fields of work, and barriers in order to achieve effective digital transformation and ensure that the community is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to keep up with the fast-changing digital landscape. Main takeaways are:

- Break up the silo culture and try to support municipalities not only to look at the technical perspective, but also at the skills and capacities, and the way they work.
- Translate the technical language and the technicalities into an approach that can be understood by everyone.
- Work with the citizen centric approach, focusing on the users and their needs in each phase of the design process.

## Next steps

The workshop of the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 was important to assess the needs to be further addressed and developed in the Living-In.EU movement. It is critical to address the identified barriers and leverage the identified fields of work to accelerate the transformation of cities into more efficient, resilient, and livable spaces.

Next steps will be structured at two levels. On the one hand, ENoLL and the other Go Li.EU partners will organise Capacity Building activities exclusively dedicated to the participants of the sub-group, i.e. the signatories who decide to take part in it. On the other hand, for those who do not want or cannot be part of the sub-group, various activities of the Capacity Building Programme powered by the Go Li.EU EU-funded project will be envisaged. More information on both action lines will be shared with this group in the coming months.