

The Smart Communities Network in a nutshell

Who: The Smart Communities Network comprises public organisations, networks and associations of cities and municipalities from all 27 EU Member States who have formally agreed to cooperate with the European Commission on the support of the Smart Communities ecosystem within their own country.

What: As a network of networks its mission is to enhance awareness, improve strategies and operations about digitalization and smart cities in cities and communities within the European Union. The overarching goal is to gain deeper insights into the requirements for enhancing urban management effectiveness, as viewed through the lenses of both urban planners and citizen engagement and check the benefits of using advanced data platforms. This initiative starts as part of the European Commission's Local Digital Twin (LDT) Toolbox Procurement project, which aims to integrate local communities into the EU's digital transition efforts, recognizing the essential role of municipalities in this digital era.

The network operates across all 27 EU Member States and conducts meetings both in physical and online formats.

The Smart Communities Network is endorsed by the Commission with the primary goal of involving all EU local communities, regardless of size, in the European green and digital transformation. It specifically targets cities and local communities in the early stages of their digital transformation journey, aiming to enhance their connectivity and operational efficiency related to urban management, in an increasingly digital world.

When: The network's activities are scheduled to take place until September 2025. Afterwards, the potential integration of the network into the European Digital Infrastructure Consortium on Connected Local Digital Twins towards a CitiVERSE (LDT CitiVERSE EDIC) with a view to ensuring a lasting cross-country cooperation in the EU, will be explored for up to six months, until March 2026.

How: Associations/networks or public organisations representing smart communities and cities in their Member State are the network members. The Commission has overseen the selection procedure to appoint the relevant associations to join the network, as established by the contractor. The selected network members engage with their respective cities and local communities by facilitating the organization of two types of sessions in their country:

1. Hybrid information session: This session offers insights into European digital topics, explained by experts in a clear and understandable manner to representatives from cities and local communities.
2. Online training session: Tailored to meet the specific needs of communities, this session provides in-depth training on relevant digital topics and tools.

Role of the network members:

- Each network member facilitates the organisation of a hybrid information session and an online training session within their respective countries, including logistical support, communications (promotion, translation and reporting) and content management throughout the duration of the MoU.
- Each network member participates in four hybrid meetings of approximately 2 hours each with other network members to share insights and best practices across the EU countries, between June 2024 and September 2025. The contractor organises these online meetings.

- Each network member helps the Commission and the contractor to explore the possibilities of integrating the network and its stakeholders into the LDT-CitiVERSE-EDIC.
- Each network member helps the Commission and the contractor promote activities of Lot 2 of the aforementioned tender with the network's stakeholders. This includes sending emails and using other communication channels to invite cities and municipalities in the network members' countries to participate in activities such as the Lordimas assessment and the online digital helpdesk.

Why join:

- Facilitating the digital transformation of EU local communities, to improve their connectivity and operational efficiency (e.g. digital roadmap/transformation strategies, public procurement assistance, self-assessment exercise and tracking tool for the transformation progress over time).
- Bringing together relevant data infrastructures and governance frameworks, which facilitates data pooling, access and sharing and fostering the use of AI in smart city applications.

Costs and participation: Smart Communities Network members participate voluntarily and do not receive remuneration for their participation in the network. However, subject to conditions to be communicated to the network members, expenses related to facilitating the organisation of the hybrid information session and the online training sessions for their country, with a maximum and total of € 4.500 per EU Member State, may be reimbursed.

Contact mails: The contact point for the contracting authority (European Commission/Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology) is CNECT-A5@ec.europa.eu. The contact point for the contractor is Open & Agile Smart Cities & Communities (OASC), represented by Virginie Verstraete (virginie@oascities.org) and Inge Willemsen (inge@oascities.org).