

**Invitation for commitments for
cities, regions, enterprises, innovation clusters, universities and other stakeholders
in East and North Finland, Mid-Sweden,
North Sweden and North Norway
European Innovation Partnership “Smart Cities and Communities”**

The European Innovation Partnership “Smart Cities and Communities” – what is it?

European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) bring together actors from the public and private sectors, who would like to collaborate in finding cross-sector solutions for societal challenges.

The EIP Smart Cities and Communities responds to the need of more efficient coordination of replication of smart city solutions and to enabling their access to market on a European and international level.

Smart cities and communities are energy efficient; they exploit renewable energy sources in their built environment and their transport systems and support horizontal, smart and integrated ICT systems.

Cities and regions are faced with challenges related to climate change, energy supply and price, ageing population, availability of services and competitiveness of their businesses. On the other hand, European businesses possess many skills and competences which could be better exploited by European cities and regions, creating new business opportunities. Furthermore, companies and citizens should be better integrated into the planning of Europe’s cities and regions.

Various cities and regions located in the [Northern Sparsely Populated Areas](#) (NSPA), including East and North Finland, Mid-Sweden, North Sweden and North Norway, already implement actions, which fit to the European concept of Smart Cities and Regions:

- ✓ City of Oulu (Finland) - [Hiukkavaara district](#) and [FIREBALL-project](#) (FP7-project focusing on living labs and Future Internet)
- ✓ [Digital Mikkeli](#) and Mikkeli Smart City 2020 (Finland)
- ✓ The city of Piteå (Sweden), leading in development of future vehicle fuels and the site for what will be the largest land based wind farm in Europe, a Covenant of Mayors signatory that stipulates the municipal fossil CO₂-emissions to be reduced with 90% by 2020;
- ✓ The city of Östersund (Sweden), a Covenant of Mayors signatory, with an ambitious goal of an overall CO₂ reduction target of 60% by 2020 (compared to 1990). Östersund is one of the three cities along the Green Highway, a 450 kilometers fossil-fuel-free corridor between the Bothnian Sea and the Norwegian Sea;

- ✓ The city of Bodø (Norway), which has a distinguished green profile, exemplified with the ambition of making all public service cars electric (for health services, daycare and public maintenance).

Universities, polytechnics, companies and other organisations located in the NSPA regions are involved in various other projects and activities related to smart solutions.

The many on-going activities are nevertheless still often fragmented and those developing and implementing smart solutions do not necessarily collaborate with others beyond their organisation, city, region or national borders. At the same time, many cities, regions, universities and companies all over Europe and the world are developing their own solutions in order to develop smart cities and communities (see for example [Smart Santander](#), [Amsterdam Smart City](#), [Milton Keynes: Smart](#), etc.).

The European Innovation Partnership Smart Cities and Communities aims to tackle precisely this problem, by bringing together actors from both public and private sector from all over Europe.

The call for commitments is open for submissions by individual organisations/cities, but the European Commission welcomes in particular commitments from already existing partnerships, such as the NSPA. Hence, the **NSPA network is currently preparing an application for commitment and is looking for partners:** cities, regions, companies, innovation clusters, research institutes, universities, polytechnics and any other organisations within the region. At the same time, the NSPA is in the process of identifying regions, cities and other relevant stakeholders outside the NSPA as well as outside the EU Member States, which might be beneficiary partners for the NSPA commitment.

Why should your city region, company, university... join the commitment?

The partnership has many benefits:

1. **Increased business opportunities:** the Innovation Partnership provides for an opportunity to make your city/region/company/university and expertise/innovations/research known on a European level;
2. **Joining the partnership offers a possibility to positively profile the NSPA stakeholders on a European level:** the successful applicants will be listed on the European Commission's web pages and they receive an official certificate;
3. **The partnership offers a possibility to impact the European funding programmes, such as the Horizon 2020-programme:** The NSPA network submitted in Autumn 2013 a [position paper](#) on the draft texts of the Smart City calls of the Energy Challenge Work Programme, emphasizing that also smaller towns and sparsely populated areas should have the possibility to submit project proposals for the Smart City calls of the Horizon 2020 programme. The Innovation Partnership will offer an excellent opportunity for continuing this advocacy work and will help ensuring the interests of the NSPA actors are taken into account;
4. The Innovation Partnership is not a funding instrument, but joining the partnership **enhances capacity to submit project proposals through increased knowledge on smart city issues on a European level. Furthermore, suitable partners for European projects can be found from within the EIP;** many of those involved in the EIP will possess substantial European project experience;

5. **The EIP will enable NSPA actors to learn about successful smart city concepts and solutions developed and implemented by other European cities, regions, companies etc. outside the NSPA.** The NSPA organisations can exploit, implement and further develop solutions already tested in other parts of Europe.

By its funding programmes, the EU is strongly focusing on themes related to smart cities and solutions. According to the estimations of the EU-offices of the NSPA, over 100 of the 2014-2015 calls are related to themes related to smart cities and solutions. Furthermore, funding for smart city related topics is still expected to increase in the future.

What does it cost?

There are no fees for joining the partnership, but those committed will participate by sharing their experiences and by working together on predefined goals. The work might include answering questionnaires, contributing to joint publications, and participating in meetings. Some travel costs might occur from participating joint meetings, but possibilities to organise meetings via Skype and videoconferencing will be considered when possible. All partners will also not necessarily be required at all meetings: the need for participation will always be carefully evaluated. The staff members of the NSPA EU-offices will also represent the stakeholders from the regions when possible and will be responsible for the coordination.

Which kind of human resources will be required?

Those committing to the partnership will dedicate themselves to work around topics that are already part of their daily work: therefore completely new resources are not required. In order to coordinate the actions, the EU-offices of the NSPA will establish a Working Group(s), including members from the EU offices, NSPA cities, regions, universities, companies etc. The EU offices will aim to coordinate all actions in a way that resources of the partners will be used as resource efficiently as possible, respecting existing resources as far as possible.

What are the topics of the commitment?

The EIP has defined 11 priority topics, and the applicants are requested to choose one "main" priority and as many "subpriorities" as relevant for their organisation:

1. Sustainable Urban Mobility
2. Sustainable Districts and Built Environment
3. Integrated infrastructures and Processes across Energy, ICT, and Transport
4. Citizen Focus
5. Policy and Regulation
6. Integrated planning and management
7. Knowledge sharing
8. Baselines, Performance Indicators and Metrics
9. Open data
10. Standards
11. Business models, procurement and funding

The priorities are described in detail in the [Operational Implementation Plan](#), which also includes various examples of smart solutions and technologies related to each of the priority. After the deadline for applications (15 June 2014), the European Commission will form "Action Clusters" around similar commitments submitted.

By filling a questionnaire, available on the [web](#), you can express your interest to join the NSPA commitment for the EIP and inform which of the 11 priorities is most relevant for your organisation. Although the submission deadline is not finished yet, the European Commission has already approved some applicants; two cities (Gothenburg, Sweden and Wiesloch, Germany) and one business incubator focusing on Open Data (Urban Institute, Germany). You can listen to the approved applicants' stories on why they decided to apply for the EIP on [Youtube](#).

The European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities provides considerable benefits - we wish that the questionnaire will result in reaching a wide range of interested actors from different sectors within the NSPA. The questionnaire and this background document can be freely distributed to any organisations within the NSPA.

Questions? Please do not hesitate to contact Sointu Räisänen at the East and North Finland EU Office by email sointu.raisanen@eastnorth.fi or by phone +32 493 55 27 71.

Join the EIP and be part of developing cities and communities of the future!

