

Plans to Boost the 'Small Giants' Initiative in 2022

The Small Giants initiative harnesses the collective power of the smaller European Cities – where most Europeans live! – for mutual benefit, and to accelerate the pace of positive change.

What is a Small Giant?

There is no hard and fast definition of a “Small Giant” but typically such cities:

- have a population ranging from 30,000 to 300,000,
- are progressive and ambitious, and, importantly
- are open and committed to collaborating with other Small Giants to build a community that will tackle and resolve common challenges

The term “Giant” is as much about ambition as it is scale.

The growing Small Giants network currently comprises a semi-formalised cluster of more than 50 cities across 20 countries. It aims to give Small- and Medium-Sized Cities (SMCs) a strong voice within the European Smart Cities Marketplace (SCM) and the broader EU market, to reverse the trend of focusing on larger cities. SMCs have different structures to large cities, and challenges and needs also differ in terms of scale and content. That presents opportunities to do things swiftly and differently – to scale-up solutions from smaller cities rather than scale-down pre-designed (and potentially expensive) solutions from large.

What are Small Giant's priorities?

Our “six simple questions survey” in 2021 identified the range of challenges facing SMCs as well as the significant opportunities that exist. These point to potential themes of common interest where SMCs can collaborate to deliver common solutions. These include: -

- Circular City
- Digital Responsiveness
- Urban Innovation
- Societal Insight tools
- Resilience
- Market Engagement
- Performance Management

New Opportunities for a New Year!

2022 will focus on re-building momentum for the Small Giants initiative, as early indications suggest we get used to living with Covid.

Two exciting opportunities have now got underway in the early part of 2022, so if you are interested in participating, now is a good time to raise your hand!

- (i) **Boosting Greener Cities through ICT**
- (ii) **“Mobility Islands”**

1. Boosting Greener Cities through ICT

The first builds on the Small Giants workshop that we ran late last year on the theme of Digitalisation. [empirica](#) is leading an EC call response on PCP (pre-commercial-procurement), in collaboration with [EEIP](#) (which also chairs the [Business Models and Finance Action Cluster](#) of the Smart Cities Marketplace). empirica is presently running the "procuRE" project focusing on 100% Renewable buildings and bringing considerable and relevant knowledge. The opportunity will provide selected cities with funding to procure highly innovative solutions for the greener operation of cities. The city would be part of the PCP process for selecting a common challenge that would be tested during the project fashioned to suit each city's needs. Participating cities would be able to choose and get access to which solutions should be developed by the private sector without any

commitment to procure the solution beyond the project. The effort during the project is limited whilst gaining the opportunity to tackle a common challenge across Europe jointly and clearly demonstrating to market players that cities have unmet needs. We have already had significant interest from a range of cities across Europe. If you think it may be relevant to your city, please contact me on the e-mail at the bottom of this page.

There is a 2nd strand to the proposal which focuses on data platforms for Circular Economy, for those seeking to make advances on this topic which ranked #1 in the Small Giants themes of common interest identified by our 2021 survey.

2. Mobility Islands

The second opportunity concerns “Mobility Islands”. There is an enormous need in cities to address the challenge of climate change, speed the transition to renewables, and shift to clean electric mobility. The Mobility Island concept takes an innovative, more-inclusive and service-oriented approach to help cities manage that transition. We believe smaller places can move faster and should move together. Three routes to funding are being investigated, with one being an EU call that is due to be published in April 2022. We would like the Small Giants to be ready and able to respond.

We already have a number of smaller cities that are committed to tackling this topic collaboratively. We would like to add to that to form a new Small Giant working team. Consequently, please contact me on the email below if you believe this might be relevant to your city and we will be able to provide further information. My request is for others that are in-principle interested to let me know as soon as possible so that we can arrange a call in the near future to explore a way forward together.

If you are interested in either of the above opportunities or becoming part of the growing Small Giants network please contact:

Trevor Gibson
Small Giant Lead
E-Mail: trvgib@me.com