Terms of Reference

Smart Cities Marketplace | **Focus Groups**

Name of the group: [insert name]

# Project Background

1. The Smart Cities Marketplace (SCM) was created by merging the two former Commission projects “Marketplace of the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities” (EIP-SCC) and the “Smart Cities Information System” (SCIS) into one single platform. It is a major market-changing undertaking that aims to bring cities, industries, small and medium-sized enterprises, investors, researchers, and other smart city actors together.
2. The SCM has thousands of participants from all over Europe and beyond. Their common aims are to improve citizens’ quality of life, increase the competitiveness of European cities and industry as well as to reach European energy and climate targets.

# Project Objectives

1. With a view on the transition towards a Climate Neutral Europe as informed by the European Green Deal,[[1]](#footnote-2) the aim of the SCM is to advance the market for smart and sustainable[[2]](#footnote-3) city solutions. It does so while ensuring a mutual level playing field for all smart city stakeholders within the European Union and associated countries[[3]](#footnote-4).
2. The SCM aims at being a catalyst for innovative economic and financial approaches capable to help the post-pandemic recovery phase. The SCM operates in an impartial and transparent manner.

# Terms of Reference and Duration

1. These terms of reference are applicable to each Focus group within the framework of the SCM. The terms of reference are an integral part of the work programme of the Focus group.
2. The Terms of Reference are effective from the launch date of the Focus group: [insert start date] and are valid until the [insert end date: minimum of twelve months and may be extended in justified cases] or until termination by agreement between the members.

# Goal

1. The goal of the Focus groups is to actively work on a commonly identified challenge or gap related to the green and just transition in European cities and towns. Focus groups deliver agreed final outcomes, addressing/overcoming commonly identified challenges related to the mentioned transition, e.g., by possibly informing concrete project and financial plans. These outcomes will be presented at an event linked to or organised by the SCM.
2. The [name of Focus group] is set out for the achievement of: [aims and outcomes set out in work programme].

# Membership

1. The Focus group is composed of the following members:
2. **Chair**
   * [Name, title, organisation]
3. **Co-chair**
   * [Name, title, organisation]
4. **Participants**
   * [Name, title, organisation (if relevant)]
   * [Name, title, organisation (if relevant)]
   * [Name, title, organisation (if relevant)]
5. **SCM support team** 
   * [Name, title, organisation]

# Roles and Responsibilities

1. All members of each Focus group must adhere to and comply with the SCM Charter ([here](https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-06/Smart%20Cities%20Marketplace%20Charter.pdf)).
2. The **chair** is responsible for**:** 
   1. Drafting the work programme and setting the agenda for the Focus group.
      * Including: a description of the Focus group, the tangible objective(s), the rules of participation (including adherence to the SCM Charter), and timeframe.
   2. Identifying and inviting participants to the Focus group.
   3. Coordinating and setting dates for meetings for the Focus group.
   4. Fostering collaboration within the Focus group.
   5. Sharing the relevant information with the members of the Focus group and providing insights and answers where relevant.
   6. Presenting the rationale and objectives, including remarks and suggestions from the Advisory Board[[4]](#footnote-5) of the SCM.
   7. Presenting a timeline of operation to the members of the Focus group.
   8. Closely monitoring level of engagement, timeline, and progress of the Focus group.
   9. Maintaining lively discussions and experiences within the Focus group.
   10. Removing obstacles to the Focus group’s successful delivery, adoption, and use.
   11. Steering the Focus group towards an impactful outcome and maintaining the focus on the agreed scope, outcomes, and benefits.
3. The **co-chair** is responsible for**:** 
   1. Supporting the chair in the responsibilities listed under paragraph 11.
   2. Providing secretarial support to the chair.
   3. Keeping minutes of the meetings of Focus groups.
   4. Providing a bimonthly one-slide status update to the SCM support team.
   5. Reporting regularly to the SCM support team to discuss level of engagement and needs of the Focus group.
   6. Consulting with the SCM support team to provide interesting insights, stories, and examples for further dissemination.
4. The **participants** are responsible for**:** 
   1. Attending and actively participating in the Focus group.
   2. Providing suggestions, inputs, and insights, and sharing all communications and information to the Focus group.
   3. Making timely contributions and ensuring that the activities of the Focus group are not held up.
5. The **SCM support team** is responsible for**:** 
   1. Providing relevant templates to the members.
   2. Reporting, monitoring, and general calendar setting.
   3. Outreach to potential members of the Focus group.
   4. Outreach to wider network, spreading outcomes.
   5. Setting up the platform for Focus group, in collaboration with the chair and co-chair.
   6. General IT-management and assistance.
6. **All members** can expect:
   1. That each member will be provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner.
   2. To be given reasonable time to make key decisions.
   3. Open and honest discussions, without resort to any misleading assertions.
   4. Professional behaviour and respect for one another’s opinions, backgrounds, knowledge, and expertise.
   5. That each member will notify one another as soon as any matter arises which may be deemed to affect the development of the Focus group.

# Process

## Launch of the Focus Group

1. Once the Advisory Board of the SCM has agreed on the topics, objectives and expected duration for the Focus group, the SCM Secretariat confirms the chair and selects a co-chair from its secretariat.
2. The chair and co-chair design and develop a work programme. The work programme should include the final outcome, objectives, milestones, key performance indicators (KPI), and timeline of the Focus group.
3. The chair, co-chair and the SCM support team reach out to the wider community to build the Focus group and invite potential members.
4. The chair – in collaboration with the co-chair and the SCM support team – organises a first meeting for all interested members. During this meeting:
   1. the work programme is presented;
   2. the participants are invited to provide suggestions, inputs, and insights to the work programme;
   3. the participants discuss and detail modes of operation, and finetune the exact format in which the final outcome will be delivered (project, demonstrator, report, online seminar, white paper, or other).

## Informing the Advisory Board of the SCM

1. The Focus group is responsible to provide the Advisory Board of the SCM with brief updates every six months. The Focus group presents its final results as agreed in the work programme at the meeting of the Advisory Board of the SCM following the termination of the Focus group.

## Termination of the Focus Group

1. The termination of the Focus group is linked to events organised within the SCM’s network. Once the objectives set out in the work programme are achieved, the Focus group presents the outcomes at events in connection to the SCM . The Focus group is further invited to contribute to other activities such as webinars, knowledge material, and general outreach within the SCM’s wider network.
2. The final outcome of the Focus group is delivered to the SCM Secretariat as agreed in the work programme. The SCM Secretariat controls the project’s quality and shares and stores the results on the SCM website. The output may be provided in different languages.
3. The milestones are set out in the work programme of the Focus group. If at any time during the project the chair or co-chair conclude that the objectives and milestones are not met, or that the work programme, the terms of references or the SCM Charter are not sufficiently complied with, the chair and co-chair have the discretion and responsibility to end the project in a timely manner. The chair and co-chair are responsible for sending out a message to all the members to address the reasoning behind the end of the Focus group, including a notification that the Focus group will end within three weeks. Depending on the reasons for ending the Focus group, the chair and co-chair can choose to organise a meeting with the members, to evaluate the reasons for ending the Focus group.

# Amendments

1. The Terms of Reference may be amended in writing after consultation and agreement with the SCM Secretariat and the Focus group.

1. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Fully in line with supporting the delivery of the EU Green Deal and while being technology neutral, these developments would also include aspects of climate neutrality, a fair and just transition, fully engaging the local community as well as tackling energy poverty, for example. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation\_horizon-euratom\_en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. See section 1.1.1 of the SCM Charter for more details. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)