



## Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability and Social Innovation

# Open4Citizens

The project will work in the context of the advancement of contemporary cities towards the concept of *smart city*. The idea of smart city however, has often been referred to a progressive digitalization of services in everyday life, whereas the social aspects of this advancement have often been neglected.

While technological advancements would offer citizens new chances to reach a higher level of customization of services used in everyday life, the lack of citizen participation in the creation of such services forces citizens to conform to useless constraints or, in some cases, hinders the citizen's access to public services.

This is particularly evident when focusing on open data. A large amount of open data is already publicly available and more data will be added in open data sets in the near future, that comes from sensors, computers, machines and even from people, who like to share their thoughts, pictures activities, physical condition and physical exercise. Cities are becoming open-open air data factories. Open data is more and more seen as a resource, or even as a new commons. The availability of such data to citizens is however limited, because

- this resource is not perceived to be accessible by all the citizens
- it is indeed hard to make use of open data without a high level of *data literacy* and
- the level of civic awareness of the potential offered by this resource is still very low

The Open4Citizens project aims at giving citizens an effective capability to harness the full potential of open data, by creating an infrastructure in which they can collaborate in creating meaningful applications of data for services concerning their everyday life.

### Social value/Social Innovation

This project will address the crucial topic of collective awareness by creating a concrete possibility for citizens to: 1) widen their awareness of problems experienced in the city, by developing new or change solutions in a collaborative way; 2) improve their ability to capture the potentials of open data for the common good. The project will empower citizens by providing them the conceptual and methodological tools to use open data as the resource to improve the quality of their everyday life.



## Objectives

Operationally Open4Citizens will have the following objectives for widening the social sustainability of urban services and making citizens recognize and get benefit from the existence of Open Data:

- OBJ.01: creating OpenDataLabs where citizens can design new services, or improving the existing ones, in a collaborative environment, and by using Open Data;
- OBJ.02: exploring Hackathons as new forms of collaboration among citizens, technical experts and public institutions that enable citizens, interest groups and grassroots communities to understand and use the potential of open data
- OBJ.03: overcoming the cognitive gap citizens have with respect to Open Data by making that knowledge available in form of consultants in the OpenDataLabs where citizens will experience the practical value of Open Data in the conception, modification, adaptation and maintenance of urban services;
- OBJ.04: combining two specific models of OpenDataLabs specifically the *solutions development lab* and the *incubator models*
- OBJ.05: exploring and driving opportunities for further exploitation and implementation of the developed and tested solutions through social network
- OBJ.06: creating an international network of cities and organizations where the OpenDataLabs model implemented by Open4Citizens can be replicated and transferred so generating an international movement based on network cooperation and learning.

## Approach and methodology

The project will focus on citizens' participation, for this reason a large part of the effort will be dedicated to citizens' involvement. This will reflect into the approach and the methodology: **Approach:** the critical moment in the project will consist on the moment of co-creation, in which citizens, interest groups, communities, students, public institutions' representatives and experts will co-create new solutions. **Methodology:** citizens participation will be possible through a cycle of *hackathons*, i.e. intensive workshops in which citizens, interest groups, public authorities, start-up companies and other relevant stakeholders collaborate with IT experts in the creation of applications based on the use of Open Data. This activity will consolidate the experience in the hackathons into the concept of *OpenDataLab*, that will be physical/virtual platforms (or *playgrounds*) that could be the reference for citizens to generate new solutions based on the availability of open data.

## Innovation potential

The innovation potential of this project could be understood by drawing a parallel between 3D printing and open data. 3D printing offers a huge potential for each of us but only few of us know how to translate good



ideas into a representation that can be used by a machine to produce it. For this reason the role of places like FabLab become critical, they are the place in which individual ideas and concepts are translated into material objects, thanks to the help of IT experts.

The parallel with 3D printing emphasizes the potential offered by open data, to shape the services around us, from traffic to urban services, from healthcare to environmental services. Those who are now able to control or work with open data, (e.g. students, startup companies) are producing huge quantities of applications that do not often meet the market. The creation of a “FabLab for open data” will support the collaboration of different stakeholders to the generation of new solutions. The *OpenDataLabs* created in this project will become the reference for future forms of collaboration.

### Scalability

The concept of OpenDataLab, developed in this project will be tested in 5 locations, taking into account the possibility to scale up or reproduce the concept both in terms of physical infrastructures and as a methodology to involve citizen into the co-design process and raise their awareness of the potential of open data.