City managers

Local start-ups and businesses are often sceptical about the ability of local policy makers to design effective and useful digital firm-specific policies. This scepticism usually results from the perceived low digital literacy of some public servants and from the lack of public support or investments in digital infrastructures and initiatives. As a city manager, you are responsible for the creation of an entrepreneurial spirit in your public administration in order to ensure public support for the digital transformation of the city.

Mobilising public officers

Unless local authorities and public officers overhaul the way they work, they will fail to create an environment conducive to the digital transformation of their city. **An all-encompassing digital strategy for the city needs to be developed,** that requires the involvement and inputs of all the departments of the city or regional council.

Identifying bottlenecks in the digital ecosystem is key to the success of the digital strategy of the city. City managers must therefore make sure that public officers develop close relations with entrepreneurs and innovators in the digital ecosystem. Ideally, they should set up a territorial collaborative leadership team to foster and drive digital development and innovation. Members of the team would be able to interact with a broad range of key actors in the territory thanks to digital platforms and other digital arenas built for that specific purpose.

City managers should also pay attention not to set digital goals that cannot be achieved. In close collaboration with entrepreneurs, researchers and citizens, city managers must **design a realistic strategic road map for the digital transformation of their city**.

Allowing real-time societal experimentation

In order to increase the pace of digital transformation, city managers can **develop and support city test bed projects,** which include for example the life testing of advanced analytics, such as video analytics and e-sensing. Such projects, if they garner citizen support, will provide added intelligence to stakeholders aiming to create civic value through digital technologies.

Transforming public officers into digital ambassadors

Similarly to other industries, the public sector seriously lacks digital talents. As public officers should have a minimum technical understanding of the opportunities and challenges brought by digital technologies, city managers should give them the possibility **to follow trainings to advance their digital capabilities**. They could also **organise digital boot camps** for local policy makers who have difficulties in navigating the digital space.

Moreover, no good plan exists without good leaders and champions. City managers should therefore **seek to develop an entrepreneurial culture** within their own organisation. They could also support public sector intrapreneurs in implementing their digital ideas in-house.

Facilitating access to data

Even if city streets are blanketed with thousands of sensors to track every single move, a city will only become truly digital if the public data collected is available for use. Investing in digital technologies is therefore not enough. City managers should also **put in place procedures and policies allowing efficient and secure data transfer and usage**.

Orchestrating digital infrastructure

City managers have the ability to improve the digital infrastructure of their city, enabling it to offer better and more reliable services. They should perform **cost-benefit analyses** to assess the usefulness of investments in digital infrastructure and prioritise investment areas. They must also use European funds (e.g. Horizon 2020) and develop public-private partnerships to **finance their digital infrastructures**.