

# **ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe (RDF-EUR)**

Information and Communication Technologies for Attaining
Sustainable Development Goals

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https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/Events/2019/RDF/Regional-Development-Forum.aspx

## CONTRIBUTION BY THE REPUBLIC OF GREECE

## TITLE: ITU Forum on ICT innovation ecosystem for Smart Cities

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**Europe Regional Initiative:** EUR5: ICT-centric innovation ecosystems

Year(s) of implementation: 2020

### **Background**

In the context of promoting digital cohesion and the role of ITU as a global leader for telecommunications and ICTs, the General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post, as a competent authority for Telecommunications, organized in 2018 two events that aimed to provide a dialogue at international level that respond to major challenges for telecommunications and ICTs.

The first event was held on 12 July 2018 in NY, during the High Level Political Forum of the United Nations, which concerned Smart Sustainable Cities for implementing the SDGs. It was a vital proof that working hard to maximize the tremendous potential that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, blockchain, the Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G have, will facilitate the path for building smart sustainable cities. It is evident that Smart City technologies are not only transforming how we live work and play in our cities, but they are also transforming how governments operate Cities for the citizens. Quickly changing technologies are becoming more affordable and City departments are all taking advantage of the cost savings and societal benefits this provides. The essential technical elements for being Smart within the context of smart sustainable cities are: to possess collaborative knowledge in operation, to enable compatibility in service and application, to ensure integrity in platform, to permit interoperability of data, and to establish interconnectivity of infrastructure. Local data on infrastructure, systems, and services such as culture, history, citizens' behaviors, efficiency, economics, and other similar priorities and local specificities of the city should also be taken into consideration when deploying emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

The second event was held on 11-12 October 2018 in Athens and concerned the ITU Forum titled "Towards 5G Enabled Gigabit Society". This Forum was hosted by the Ministry for Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media of Greece and co-organized with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). It was another evidence of the strong commitment of the General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post of Greece to actively participate in the initiatives of ITU. It was also the result of proactive position of the Ministry for Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media on further improvement of the National Policy for Next Generation Access Networks and ICT. The fast evolution of related technologies does not only promise to offer tremendous opportunities for many industries, but also empowers governments to confront the challenges of the upcoming 4th industrial revolution. These challenges are not restricted to the dissemination







of knowledge at national or international levels as this Forum aimed, but may also be extended to leverage a country's strength in the global industry, using suitable promotion and supportive mechanisms. These mechanisms concern the preparation of a National Digital Strategy and the formulation of a technology ecosystem involving key stakeholders in the field, these being the Government, Academia and the Industry. Participation and collaboration with each of these stakeholders is essential, so that a new institutional framework policy may be prepared for the promotion of a new technology development. In this context, infrastructure development, security and upgrading of digital public services were discussed, sectors that are the foundations and the prerequisites for the digital transformation of Greece.

#### Proposal

The Greek Ministry of Telecommunications and Media would like to propose to host a Regional Forum on the ICT innovation ecosystem for Smart Cities in Greece. There are many challenges and opportunities we face regarding innovation and our government pursues to enable the implementation of an ICT-centric society, but also introduce new opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation

ICTs are transforming how consumers, the industry, and governments acquire and share knowledge, so our proactive participation in the global information society, will accelerate the implementation of the digital transformation of our economy. Cities are facing two major transformations. The first, concerns their vast growth and second, their evolvement into "smart cities".

ICTs are critical components for governments in facing the challenge of unprecedented urban growth. They can contribute to improve urban management, as means of service deliver and participation. Smart Cities, can be the pathway for sustainable growth and a means to face new urban challenges. Additionally, ICTs may cause the disruption of traditional community structures, that may lead in Digital Divides. By encouraging citizens to participate on national initiatives, by communicating the positive benefits that ICTs promise, by mitigating the results of success stories that use ledger technologies, and by promoting the impact of ICTs in the socio—economic growth of the country, will evolve in a new culture, a new community philosophy, that will engage people to embrace new technologies, rather than being suspicious and fearful.

The event will be hosted by the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media and it will be in accordance to the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe on ICT-centric innovation ecosystems.

Greece states its readiness to contribute actively to ITU's initiatives.



