

G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance

PROJECT CASE STUDY
OCTOBER 2020

Project overview

Led by the World Economic Forum, the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance is the largest of its kind, with over 20 partners representing more than 200,000 cities and local governments, companies, start-ups, research institutions and non-profit organizations. Together, they create, test and implement global norms and policy standards to help ensure that publicly collected data is used safely and ethically.

Every month, the world's urban population grows by about six million people. To support their booming urban populations, many cities have come to rely on the internet of things (IoT) – the world's ever-expanding network of connected devices – to collect, share and analyse real-time data on urban environments. The data gathered using IoT technologies in public spaces (by traffic cameras, WiFi hotspots and other devices) is helping these “smart cities” combat crime, reduce pollution, decrease traffic congestion, improve disaster preparedness and more. However, it is also raising growing concerns about privacy, security and other risks. Without proper governance, these smart city technologies pose significant challenges that can outweigh their benefits. But despite the growing number of smart cities around the world, no global framework exists for regulating how data should be collected in public spaces and subsequently used.

Project phases

Assess

To start building the necessary global framework, world leaders at the 2019 G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan, announced the launch of an unprecedented global alliance that will unite existing entities working in the smart city space. As the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation, the World Economic Forum was selected to be the secretariat of the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance. Officially launched in October 2019, the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance aims to establish global policy benchmarks for smart city governance in areas such as data collection, public transparency and resilience. Working together with local and national governments, as well as with private sector partners and city

residents, the alliance is designing innovative policy solutions to help cities responsibly implement IoT technologies.

Design and deploy

The G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance is designing a first-of-its-kind global policy framework on smart city technologies ahead of the 2020 G20 Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. To begin this process, the first policy design workshops with city leaders were held in November 2019 at the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona, Spain. From this starting point, the alliance has assembled a growing network of more than 50 smart city experts from around the world to develop the most detailed policy framework ever assembled in the smart cities domain. In parallel, the alliance is in negotiations with more than 20 cities to create a cohort of pilot cities that will test this year the framework, from such megacities as Istanbul and Mexico City, to pioneering cities such as Medellin and Milan.

Monitoring and evaluation

Since launching the alliance, the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution Japan has been cultivating relationships with city governments in Japan to facilitate knowledge exchange through monthly meetings and to evaluate the suitability of the new policy framework. Through this preparation, more than 10 Japanese cities are prepared to work with alliance partners to test the framework alongside the global cohort of pilot cities. The City of Kaga, for example, has recently announced a Smart City Declaration and will adopt policies that the alliance is developing to promote privacy, resilience, sustainability and openness for the benefit of citizens. Other Japanese cities are set to follow this example.

Next steps and scale

The G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance is launching its pilot city programme at Smart City Live, the biggest industry event for smart cities in 2020. This will mark the start of pilot activities. In 2021, these cities will develop plans to adapt and adopt policies from the new framework. At the same time, the Forum will use the learnings from this process to upgrade the policy framework, so that it can be used concurrently by hundreds more cities through a digital platform.