

# CoR and ESPON need your help to map digital innovation on local level



□□ The DIGISurvey, a keystone of the [DIGISER project](#) was launched on 8 June 2021. DIGISER is a research project under the ESPON programme carried out by OASC, IS-Practice, POLIMI, CPC, and Deloitte.

Data on how cities, towns and rural areas across Europe tackle digital innovation is scarce. The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) provides an insight on the national level, but a DESI for the local level does not exist. For some years, the CoR has been working with its partners on the LORDI (Local and Regional Digital Indicators) framework, which will now be filled by data from this DIGISurvey. The DIGISurvey aims at measuring the digital innovation of governance and public service provision on the local level.

□ [Complete the survey here](#)

## □ **Towards effective local decision-making**

Local authorities need relevant data based on the different needs and setup of their public services to make well-informed decisions on the best possible actions to boost digital transformation. “This is the place where the DIGISER project with its DIGISurvey has shown to be effective: the DIGISurvey will gather data from cities and municipalities to provide decision-makers with relevant and comparable information on digital transformation in their constituencies and to inspire digital transformation processes,” **Michael Murphy**, Chair of the ECON commission of the European Committee of the Regions, points out.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of our society to unforeseen events. Nevertheless, it has also shown that those who had been relying on digital solutions could better face the negative impact of the economic shock. Therefore, the Living-in.EU initiative, a movement to boost sustainable digital transformation in cities and communities in the EU, is of key importance for the EU to promote the transition towards a cohesive, digital Europe, where no one is left behind,” he adds.

## **Towards better policies**

The results of the DIGISurvey will help mayors, local councillors and elected politicians deliver new and effective digital solutions to their citizens. The data gathered will provide local administrations information on best practices that cities across Europe have already adopted, as well as insight into projects that did not deliver the expected results. More importantly, the results of the survey will help inform national and EU policies and support programmes, based on input received from the local level.

**Martin Gauk**, Project Coordinator of ESPON DIGISER, explains that good metrics can direct better policies. “In order to promote digital transformation and the scaling up of digital innovation in cities and communities, we need to know what works, what doesn’t and why. And that means turning to measurements and metrics. In order to boost digital transformation through a ‘European Way’ where digital solutions help to create places where people enjoy living and working, we have to have more discussion on how to design policies that would support this goal.”

He adds that a fruitful discussion needs to happen at the level of the (digital) single market, where local, regional, national and international actors all have a role in shaping it. “That requires a better understanding, evidence and engagement. Hence, participation in this survey is not only about providing input, but it is also about having a voice in the process of how best to go ahead with this transformation, learning from themselves and from other cities – from the successes as well as the struggles.”

“Furthermore, there are substantial resources allocated to boost and scale the digital transformation for the next programming period. Having the right understanding and information, cities can use the results of this survey as an argument for acquiring financial support for their efforts related to digital transformation.”

As **Markku Markkula**, Chair of the Espoo City Board, President of the Helsinki Region and member of the Broadband Platform, says, “Digitalisation is embedded everywhere. And digital-assisted innovations are influencing everywhere. This renewal transcends to the core of what we do and how we operate today in Espoo and Oulu as European digitalisation forerunner municipalities – and for sure in many other cities, towns, and villages in Finland and Europe. Digital innovation is the driver of more people-centric public services. DIGISER will be fundamental in mapping out the status quo in cities, towns, and rural areas across Europe. In Espoo, we have gladly contributed to the survey and are looking forward to the results.”

The more cities that take part in the survey, the more data can be collected and the better informed local administrations can be when deciding on the best path towards their digital transformation.

“You can only know whether you progress in your local digital transformation if you measure it. This is what we do at the national level and it is what we lack at the local level. This survey that will result in commonly agreed digital indicators is essential for all cities and communities. It will help cities to help themselves. I invite all EU cities and communities to take part and shape the Local and Regional Digital Indicator framework together,” **Eddy Hartog**, Head of Unit Technologies for Smart Communities of the European Commission, explains.

[Click here](#) for more information on ESPON DIGISER.