

**Summary of a Survey on the Europe 2020  
Flagship Initiative  
“A Digital Agenda for Europe”**

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# 1. Basic Information

In the second quarter of 2013, the Committee of the Regions (CoR), through its Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform, conducted a survey on the state of play of the Europe 2020 strategy’s flagship initiative “**Digital Agenda for Europe**”<sup>1</sup> from the viewpoint of Local and Regional Authorities.

This survey is part of a broader monitoring exercise on Europe 2020, which was launched by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) in October 2012 and will last until November 2013. The results of these individual assessments will provide the backdrop for seven conferences – one for each flagship initiative assessment – that will subsequently feed into the contribution of the Committee of the Region to the EU Commission’s mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy due in 2014. The present survey report is based on 31 responses from 13 EU member states (Figure 1). The findings will be presented at the CoR conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013.

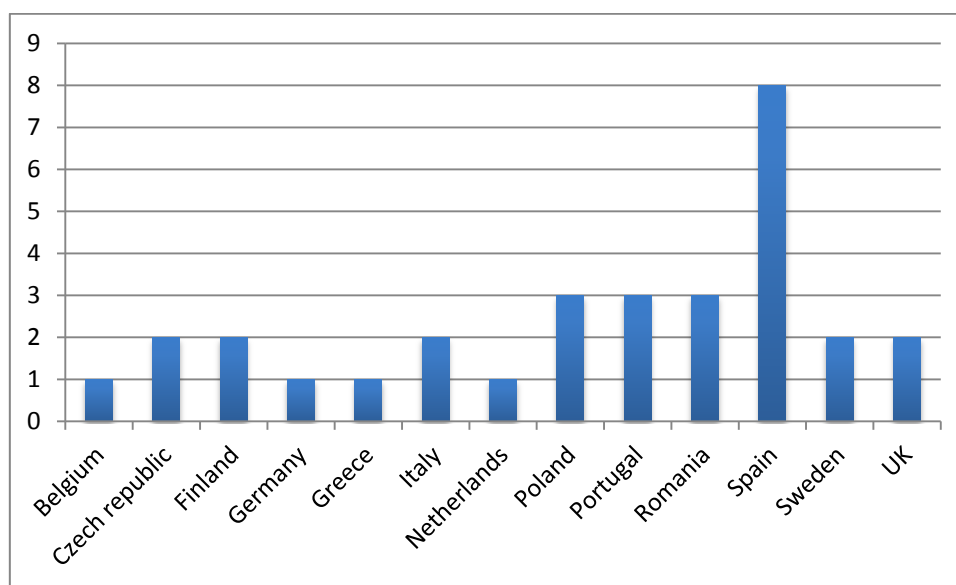
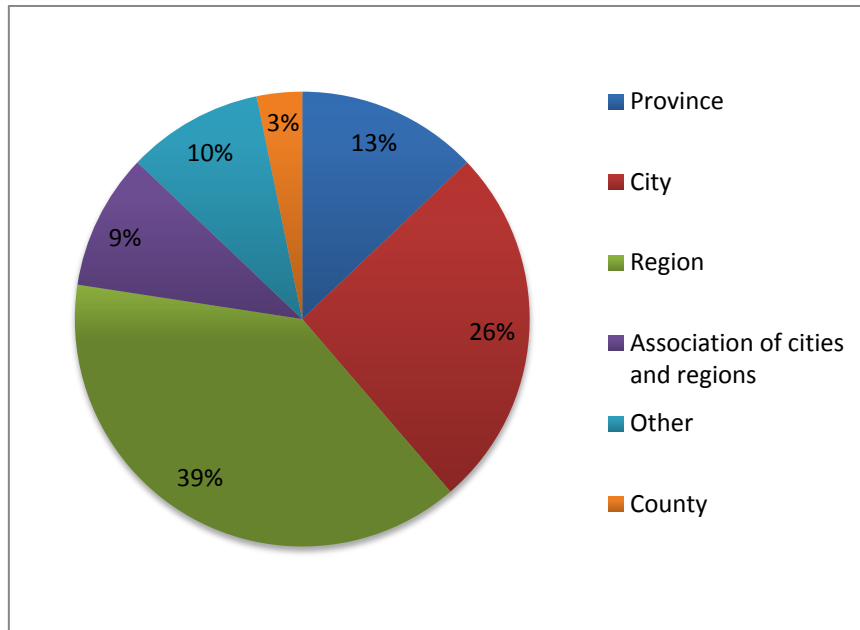


Figure 1: The number of responses received by EU Member State

The majority of responses were provided by – or on behalf of – regional authorities (39%), followed by cities (26%), provinces (13%), others (10%), associations of cities and regions (9%), and counties (3%) as depicted in Figure 2. Contributions from ‘others’ stem from organisations such as the Spanish ‘Economista’ and parts of EU member countries such as the ‘Crete region’ of Greece and the ‘North East RDA region’ of Romania. Thirteen of the responding authorities are members of the Committee of the Region’s Monitoring Platform for the Europe 2020 Strategy.

<sup>1</sup> The survey was open between 23 March and 27 May 2013; the questionnaire and basic background can be found at: <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/MonitoringFlagships/Pages/Digital-Agenda-for-Europe.aspx>



**Figure 2: Survey responses by type of authority**

This report is divided into four sections in accordance with the blocks of questions included in the survey questionnaire. These sections are:

- Policy challenges and responses at regional and local level
- The relevance of the “Digital Agenda for Europe” for European cities and regions
- The relevance of national policies for European cities and regions
- Policy funding issues

Each section both summarises the main trends emerging from the responses and highlights particular perspectives as well as unique comments. These four sections are preceded by an introductory section providing information on the flagship initiative itself as well as on current issues and challenges in the related policy field.

## 2. Current issues and challenges in the policy field

The Digital Agenda for Europe was established with a view to stimulating economic growth, while, at the same time, addressing social challenges through information and communications technology. The flagship initiative aims to speed up the roll out of the high speed Internet and reap the benefits of a digital single market for households and firms in Europe. The flagship initiative comprises seven pillars, each with a set of specific objectives:

1. **Digital Single Market.** The Digital Agenda will update EU Single Market rules for the digital era. The aims are to boost the music download business, establish a single area for online payments, and further protect EU consumers in cyberspace.

2. **Interoperability and Standards.** Europe must ensure that new IT devices, applications, data repositories and services interact seamlessly anywhere. The Digital Agenda identifies improved standard-setting procedures and increased interoperability as the keys to success.

3. **Trust and security.** The Digital Agenda proposes a number of practical solutions, including a coordinated European response to cyber-attacks and reinforced rules on personal data protection.

4. **Fast and ultra-fast access to the Internet.** To match world leaders like South Korea and Japan, Europe needs download rates of 30 Mbps for all of its citizens and at least 50% of European households subscribing to internet connections above 100 Mbps by 2020.

5. **Research and Innovation.** Currently, EU investment in ICT research is still less than half US levels. The Digital Agenda seeks to maintain Europe's competitive edge through increased coordination and elimination of Europe's fragmented efforts.

6. **Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion.** Over 50% of Europeans use the internet daily – but 30% have never used it at all. As ever more daily tasks are carried out online, everyone needs enhanced digital skills to participate fully in society.

7. **ICT-enabled benefits for EU society.** The Digital Agenda focuses on ICTs' capability to reduce energy consumption, support ageing citizens' lives, revolutionises health services and deliver better public services.

In the end of 2012, the European Commission reviewed the “Digital Agenda” flagship initiative and highlighted several need areas with a special focus on enhancing growth and employment in Europe.

The expansion of high-speed internet access (pillar 4 of the Digital Agenda) took centre stage in the review, which called for a “*wake-up call' on high speed broadband*”<sup>2</sup>. While penetration rates were found to be on the rise the lack of fast and ultra-fast internet connections, especially in rural and marginal areas, still inhibits the full utilization of up to date digital technologies and services, such as cloud computing, smart cities and audiovisual services<sup>3</sup>. High speed internet is thus the basis for achieving almost all other targets set in the agenda with their associated economic and social benefits. Consequently, the review process resulted in an amended set of policy priorities for 2013/14 aimed at creating adequate framework conditions for investments in network expansion and the promotion of a digital economy<sup>4</sup> (see Figure 3 below).

- Create a new and stable broadband regulatory environment.
- New public digital service infrastructures through Connecting Europe Facility
- Launch Grand Coalition on Digital Skills and Jobs
- Propose EU cyber-security strategy and Directive
- Update EU's Copyright Framework
- Accelerate cloud computing through public sector buying power
- Launch new electronics industrial strategy – an "Airbus of Chips"

**Figure 3: New priorities for 2013/14 in the context of the reviewed Digital Agenda flagship initiative**

At the same time, the main funding instrument behind the flagship initiative fell victim to tough EU budget negotiations in early 2013. The digital part of the Connecting Europe Facility, which was originally stocked with €9.2 billion, will now only dispose of €1 billion. This radical budget cut can be expected to hit local and regional authorities, which are among the main beneficiaries of the instrument and have consistently rated the Digital Agenda as one of the Top 2 most relevant flagship initiatives, particularly hard<sup>5</sup>.

In a commentary in respect to the budget cut, Commissioner Kroes, who is responsible for the Digital Agenda, anticipates that the remaining funds will be mainly channelled into the expansion of the digital public service infrastructure, thus contributing to the creation of the digital single market<sup>6</sup> (pillar 1 of the

<sup>2</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-1389\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1389_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/SiteCollectionDocuments/Third%20CoR%20report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-1389\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1389_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/SiteCollectionDocuments/Third%20CoR%20report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/neelie-kroes/eu-budget-innovation-cef/>



Digital Agenda). While this is in line with the amended priorities for implementation, all other potential funding areas will most likely suffer heavily. With most member states still grappling with the consequences of the 2009 economic crisis and the resulting trend towards budget consolidation, national governments cannot be expected to make up for the impending funding shortfall. There is reason to believe that this might also result in a significant slowdown of the expansion of ultra-high speed broadband internet.

While there seems to be no immediate solution for replacing the funds previously allocated to the Digital Agenda in the short term, Commissioner Kroes announced her intention to lobby the European Investment Bank for an extension of their lending activities in the area of broadband infrastructure development. She also encouraged national, regional and local authorities to consider setting up more public-private partnerships in order to boost investments<sup>7</sup>. The private sector is currently reluctant to contribute to fast network expansion since the required large upfront investments present a significant business risk and resulting profits, especially from rural and marginal areas, are not sufficient to warrant an engagement<sup>8</sup>. However, renewed efforts to create a new and stable regulatory environment for broadband expansion, as envisioned in the amended priorities for 2013/14, might reduce risks and make such investments more amenable in the future.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/neelie-kroes/eu-budget-innovation-cef/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.libertyglobal.com/PDF/public-policy/LGI-report-Re-thinking-the-Digital-Agenda-for-Europe.pdf>  
(p.5)



### 3. Current policy challenges and responses at regional and local level

This section of the survey includes the following four questions:

<p><i>1) What are the main challenges currently facing your region/city in terms of (i) access to the Internet, (ii) e-Governance, and (iii) computer literacy?</i></p>
<p><i>2) Which of the aims of the Digital Agenda for Europe (listed in Box 1) are most relevant in view of the challenges currently facing your city/region?</i></p>
<p><i>3) Please briefly describe what type of policy programmes/actions are being implemented in your city/region in the policy areas covered by the <b>Digital Agenda for Europe</b>, highlighting their specific contribution to the above aims.</i></p>
<p><i>4) CoR opinions from October 2010<sup>9</sup> and October 2011<sup>10</sup> relating to the Digital Agenda for Europe identified, among others, a particular need to: i) create <b>local digital agendas</b> to speed up the optimal use of ICT through orchestrated local, regional and European cooperation, ii) improve <b>interoperability and e-government</b> by developing new applications such as human-centred e-services, e-learning, e-health and e-administration, iii) ensure <b>equal and affordable broadband access everywhere</b> and lead pilot projects aimed at closing the accessibility gap and iiiii) ensure that security requirements are met at every level so as to guarantee optimum levels of <b>privacy and protection of personal data</b>.</i>  <i>Has your city/region currently adopted specific policies in these fields? Has your city/region adopted a local/regional digital agenda?</i></p>

Table 1: List of questions included in the first thematic block of the survey

#### 3.1 General Findings

Essentially, the answers provided by the respondents in this section circled around the topic of internet speed and access. As not all regions participating in this survey are yet able to provide the whole population with high-speed internet, they are working on developing a faster and more affordable access for their citizens. At the same time, these efforts are geared towards achieving the Europe 2020 goal of 30 Mbit download rates. Furthermore, some participants stated that rural areas are still lacking fast access to the internet in comparison to urban areas. The topic of E-governance, applying ICT for providing government services, was equally seen as a challenge for local and regional authorities, which have integrated the issue in their policy programmes. In particular,

<sup>9</sup> <https://bvstoad.cor.europa.eu/corwipdetail.aspx?folderpath=EDUC-V/003&id=20662>

<sup>10</sup> <https://bvstoad.cor.europa.eu/BrowseDocuments.aspx?type=1&folder=cd\ecos-v\dossiers\ecos-v-015>

respondents stressed the need for improved interoperability between government branches and challenges related to making online public services accessible to the wider population. Moreover, digital illiteracy remains an issue; even though 50% of EU citizens use the internet regularly, 30% still belong to the group of digital illiterates. Regions and municipalities are addressing this by offering courses for the elderly as well as free internet in public WIFI spots.

Further efforts to tackle these issues include the set up of digital and ICT development plans in the political agendas of LRAs. Recurring hotspot topics are not limited to improving internet access and battling digital illiteracy. Equally important to the respondents was the promotion of ICT investments.

## **3.2 Specific Findings**

*Q1: What are the main challenges currently facing your region/city in terms of (i) access to the Internet, (ii) e-Governance, and (iii) computer literacy?*

For more than two thirds (70%) of the respondents the biggest current challenges were the widespread provision of fast broadband internet and upgrading to next generation networks. The Marshal office of the Lodzkie region (Poland) mentioned that due to a lack of ICT equipment digital exclusion has become a problem in some parts of the region. Similar conditions were reported by the Regional Government of Extremadura (Spain), where large investments are needed for introduction of fibre glass cables. The Cookstown District Council (UK) reported low internet access rates also having negative effects to local SMEs, hindering businesses to flourish. Two respondents referred to the issue of comparably slow rural internet connections as opposed to urban areas.

45% of respondents deemed E-governance a challenge that needs to be addressed urgently. Almost half of these explicitly referred to the lack of interoperability, in the sense of interconnection of different government platforms, which poses a challenge to implementing E-governance across the board.

35% of the responding LRAs reported to be facing the challenge of computer illiteracy, explaining that more training is needed for the wider population in order to avoid social exclusion of certain groups, including elderly and middle aged citizens. In the case of the City of Antwerp (Belgium), it was reported that the large variety of ethnic backgrounds and languages (170 in total) presents a barrier to widespread digital literacy training. Furthermore, the Prahova County Council (Romania) reported insufficient technical equipment, especially in schools, to efficiently carry out youth digital literacy classes.

*Q2: Which of the aims of the Digital Agenda for Europe (listed in Box 1) are most relevant in view of the challenges currently facing your city/region?*

Almost three out of four respondents (74%) stated that improving digital literacy rates is perceived as one of the major challenges in achieving the aims of the Digital Agenda. The Sunderland City Council (UK) reported that digital literacy was increasingly important for the ability of citizens to find gainful employment. Further the Region of Umbria (Italy) mentioned that digital literacy was crucial, however hard to combat since 90 out of 92 Umbrian municipalities are perceived as so called white zones.

Furthermore, 67% of the LRAs reported the improvement of high-speed internet access as another important challenge. This is equally connected to the achievement of the Digital Agenda objective of providing internet speeds of 30 Mbps download rates for all citizens by 2020. The Cookstown District Council (UK) argued that investments made in this area are still insufficient. One reason for this is that the spread of high speed internet is dominated by the private sector and its investment priorities, especially to the detriment of rural areas. The Government of Andalusia (Spain) is arguing that due to the low population density, the provision of high speed internet in rural areas is not currently practicable.

More than half of the participants (61%) reported that Research and Innovation in the ICT sector, which helps to maintain EU's competitive edge, is posing an obstacle as to fulfil goals set by the Digital Agenda. The Region of Umbria (Italy) argued that it is central to develop a strategy for smart regional specialization in technological research and innovation. The same number of respondents mentioned that ICT-enabled benefits for EU society are seen as a relevant objective of the Digital Agenda.

Thirteen out of thirty-one respondents included the aspect of Trust and Security. Another seven respondents rated interoperability and standardization as a relevant issue. Only five respondents deemed that the creation of a single digital market, which deals with harmonizing inter alia the EU online payment area and boosting faster music downloads EU wide, is posing a hurdle.

*Q3: Please briefly describe what type of policy programmes/actions are being implemented in your city/region in the policy areas covered by the **Digital Agenda for Europe**, highlighting their specific contribution to the above aims.*

More than half of the participants (55%) of this survey stated that they are including ICT-enabled benefits for EU society in their policy programmes. The Government of Andalusia (Spain) has financial instruments in place to support the implementation of ICT-based renewable energies, energy saving and energy-efficiency initiatives. The North East RDA region of Romania reported on actions to improve public service systems at municipal and national levels, supported by Structural Funds, which would be of society's benefit once fully deployed. The Madeira Autonomous Region (Portugal) has launched an action plan to reduce ICT costs of public administration, mainly through energy savings. Furthermore an energy network was set up to support the government in the energy procurement.

The Andalusian regional government's *Red de Energia* (energy network) is a body which centralises procurement of energy supply for the whole regional government. At the same time the energy network is optimising energy supply in an environmentally friendly way, taking harmful emissions to the environment into account.

**The Government of Andalusia, Spain**

Almost half of the respondents (45%) stated that the implementation of fast and ultra-fast internet access is part of their policy programme. A project in the Umbria Region (Italy) serves as a good example of investing in the ICT infrastructure.

Umbria's *Regional ICT plan* (also known as POT PT), launched for the period 2008-2010 and updated for the period 2011-2013 is aimed at breaking down the first-level digital divide and creating a next-generation fibre optic infrastructure, with a total investment of EUR 7.5 million. This funds are aimed at enabling the use of broadband and wireless systems, especially in areas with regional economic interest for SME access and IT infrastructure.

**The Umbra Region, Italy**

Another example of such policy programmes is the framework and guidelines for rolling out an NGA to all households in areas with no or low rates of internet access in the Province of Friesland (Netherlands).

39% of the respondents reported efforts to enhance digital literacy, skills and to include citizens that have never used the internet. Antwerp City (Belgium) is

trying to counteract digital illiteracy by providing free WIFI spots, called “digi spots’ in digitally deprived areas, hence their schools, libraries and community centres.

The *digi points* are organised in deprived areas and pay particular attention to disadvantaged groups. The city is investigating whether these free computer sites can be extended. Civil society or intermediate organisations, such as senior citizens' associations or organisations for the poor, are also encouraged to set up accessible workplaces.

**Antwerp city, Belgium**

The Bathala Council in Portugal even offers computer courses for the elderly in order to address those citizens who have never got in touch with the internet. Another Portuguese example for boosting digital competency is provided by the Madeira Autonomous region, which uses robotic applications in primary schools to acquaint children with the computer world.

Research and Innovation activities being a part of the national policy programme of the responding regions were reported by only 26% of the LRAs. The Basque Government (Spain) reported funding R&D in this area to encourage the uptake and use of ICTs for promoting competitiveness between SMEs. The promotion of a digital single market, interoperability and standardization as well as trust and security were the least implemented agendas on the respondents’ policy programmes.

*Q4: CoR opinions from October 2010<sup>11</sup> and October 2011<sup>12</sup> relating to the Digital Agenda for Europe identified, among others, a particular need to: i) create **local digital agendas** to speed up the optimal use of ICT through orchestrated local, regional and European cooperation, ii) improve **interoperability and e-government** by developing new applications such as human-centred e-services, e-learning, e-health and e-administration, iii) ensure **equal and affordable broadband access** everywhere and lead pilot projects aimed at closing the accessibility gap and iiiii) ensure that security requirements are met at every level so as to guarantee optimum levels of **privacy and protection of personal data**.*

*Has your city/region currently adopted specific policies in these fields? Has your city/region adopted a local/regional digital agenda?*

Two thirds of the respondents (58%) answered that they were incorporating a digital agenda in their local initiatives. This is illustrated by the case of the Tuscany Region (Italy). The region boosts local planning in the area of the IT

<sup>11</sup> <https://bvstoad.cor.europa.eu/corwipdetail.aspx?folderpath=EDUC-V/003&id=20662>

<sup>12</sup> <https://bvstoad.cor.europa.eu/BrowseDocuments.aspx?type=1&folder=cdre/ecos-v\dossiers\ecos-v-015>.

society in the form of local digital agendas, as a method and tool for linking up and co-financing actions of common interest throughout the region. The City of Malmö (Sweden) reported on its Strategy for an E-society, which promotes a digital economy including cloud computing, eHealth, and smart cities. The Sunderland City Council (UK) has created a manifesto for a digital city, which covers access, infrastructure, skills and cloud technology. Moreover, the digital agenda of the Government of Catalonia (Spain) foresees making Catalonia a leading ICT region by centralizing governance of ICT in order to generate efficiency, and, hence, improve public services and transparency.

In order to attain the objectives of the local digital agenda, the Government of Catalonia has promoted a process of transformation that aims to provide Catalonia and the government itself with a centralised ICT management model that acts as a driving force for the business sector and at the same time implies improved efficiency of the administration itself and facilitates the creation of more solid and efficient state structures.

**The Government of Catalonia, Spain**

About half of the respondents (52%) stated that they have adopted decisions on improving interoperability and e-government by developing new applications. Examples are the Cookstown District Council (UK), which offers a broad variety of online services for its citizens, as well as the Basque Government (Spain) that is enhancing its e-government abilities and focuses on the development of payment gateways. On the other hand, the Finish Economic Development Agency of the Suupohja region is focussing on increasing the number of municipalities sharing one common server and one common bookkeeping software. Moreover, the Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze Region in Warsaw (Poland) focuses on developing a proper e-governance in certain digitally low regions.

The e-Development Strategy focuses on activities aiming to even out disparities in the development of ICT, particularly in areas with low e-development potential. This objective will be realised through the implementation of information projects and activities for the development of e-services available to the public and businesses with a regional and local dimension.

**The Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze Region in Warsaw, Poland**

45% of the respondents stated that they are ensuring equal and affordable broadband access in their region through their adopted policies. The Tuscany Region (Italy) is investing in the ICT sector to provide a fast internet connection to its citizens, closing the digital gap by 2014.



Tuscany plans to close the digital divide in the region by 2014. It is investing in faster connection services and the design of tools to support the activation of connection services by telecommunications operators. It is also making the Network of assisted internet access points available to citizens and businesses. Qualified operators carry out digital literacy activities and help inexperienced people use the Public Administration's digital services.

**The Tuscany Region, Italy**

The Government of Catalonia (Spain) plans to upgrade the 100 Mb connection in almost 5,000 government administrative offices. The Cookstown District Council (UK) aims at installing a WiFi network in the town of Cookstown allowing users a 1 hour free connection to the network from any WiFi enabled device.

Only 16% of the respondents have activities in place on the issues of security, privacy, and protection of personal data.



## 4. How is the “Digital Agenda for Europe” relevant for your city or region?

This section of the survey includes the following four questions:

<p>5) The <b>Digital Agenda for Europe</b> as updated by the Commission in December 2012, sets out a "Digital Agenda Review" based on the seven priorities/transformative actions presented in <b>Box 2</b> above. Which of these actions are most relevant to your specific local/regional situation?</p>
<p>6) Which of the actions and priorities under the <b>Digital Agenda for Europe</b> (set out in <b>Box 2</b>) are the most difficult to achieve in your city/region? Please, explain why.</p>
<p>7) Overall, what are the <b>strong</b> and <b>weak</b> points of the <b>Digital Agenda for Europe</b>, as seen from your regional/local standpoint?</p>
<p>8) Would you recommend <b>any specific changes</b> to the <b>Digital Agenda for Europe</b>, following Europe 2020's mid-term review in 2014?</p>

Table 2: List of questions included in the second thematic block of the survey

### 4.1 General Findings

As for the relevance of the Digital Agenda for Europe for the cities and regions represented in this survey, it can be said that it was generally welcomed that there are defined goals, which aim at a single digital market, establishing progressive access to internet and pushing for digital skills. However, LRAs complained about too little guidance delivered by the EU on how to implement these goals, mentioning inter alia the problem of digitally deprived rural areas.

The most relevant actions for the regions are related to the Connecting Europe Facility as well as the regulatory broadband environment and digital skills. The biggest challenge as identified by the respondents of this survey was cloud computing due to insufficient funding.

In general, LRAs are seeking much more guidance on how to implement the objectives set by the Digital Agenda, while at the same time being in need of increased funds for fulfilment of the latter.

## 4.2 Specific Findings

*Q5: The Digital Agenda for Europe as updated by the Commission in December 2012, sets out a "Digital Agenda Review" based on the seven priorities/transformational actions presented in **Box 2** above. Which of these actions are most relevant to your specific local/regional situation?*

Six out of ten LRAs (58%) who participated in this survey pointed to the Connecting Europe Facility, which deals with new public digital service infrastructures, as the most relevant action to their local situation. The Cookstown District Council (UK) argued that the aim of the Connecting Europe Facility can only be reached if sufficient EU funding is made available for bridging the imbalance in broadband investments between urban and rural areas. The reduction in funding removed any possibility of substantially addressing market failure in rural areas. Furthermore the City of Antwerp (Belgium) stated that it is trying to provide digital public services to its citizens, by introducing enhanced customer management.

The City of Antwerp striving to achieve modern customer management, by a digital approach, which is a crucial part of this undertaking. It offers citizens the opportunity to have an administrative request handled completely digitally smoothly, without having to come in person to a counter.

**The City of Antwerp, Belgium**

Furthermore, the North-East RDA from Romania reports on new digital public services to be improving living standards through increased access to public and social services.

In addition more than half of the LRAs (55%) stated that creating a regulatory broadband environment as well as the launch of a grand coalition on digital skills and jobs is of relevance to their situation. The Umbria Region (Italy) stated that there is a need for a regulatory broadband environment at the EU and national levels since legislative requirements directly determine infrastructure standards in the field of telecommunications. A similar reasoning was given by the Romanian North-East RDA, which argues that a regulatory broadband environment would help standardize conditions for the provision and use of services in the market place. Furthermore, the Cookstown District Council (UK) argues that there is a direct correlation between digital skills and jobs.

Four out of ten respondents (39%) declared enhancing cloud computing through public sector buying power to be of importance. The Umbria Region (Italy), for instance, argues that the latter would improve the interoperability within the public sector.

The aspect of cyber security was only mentioned by 23% of the participants as being of crucial value and updating the EU's copyright framework as well as launching a new electronic strategy was deemed important by only 10% of the respondents.

*Q6: Which of the actions and priorities under the Digital Agenda for Europe (set out in Box 2) are the most difficult to achieve in your city/region? Please, explain why*

Most of the LRAs (25%) reported encountering significant difficulties with regard to accelerating cloud computing. However, a quarter of the respondents (13%) did not answer this question at all. The Prahova region in Romania stated that cuts in the IT budget made it difficult to accelerate cloud computing. The same problem is faced by Netport Beklinge from Sweden, the Regional Council of North Karelia (Finland) as well as by the Madeira Autonomous Region (Portugal), all pointing to insufficient funds as the main reason for the slow pace of cloud computing development.

Creating a new and stable broadband regulatory environment, developing new public digital service infrastructures through the Connecting Europe Facility and updating the EU's copyright framework are equally causing difficulties for 23% of the respondents. The Sunderland City Council (UK) responded to this question stating that more EU guidance would be required on a broadband regulatory environment and updating the EU's copyright framework. The Province of Friesland (Netherlands) and the Tuscany Region (Italy) argued that their regions had too little room for manoeuvre for shaping these kinds of policies.

*As stated by the representative of the Tuscany Region ... continuing to break down the digital divide through the roll-out of broadband is not easy within a still fragmented regulatory framework and in a context of severe economic constraints; and the same goes for the development of cloud computing.*

**The Tuscany Region, Italy**

Proposing an EU cyber-security strategy and Directive was identified as a major difficulty by 20% of LRAs. The Prahova Region (Romania) argued that the encountered difficulties in this area are attributable to low standards in personal data protection due to budget cuts in the ICT sector. In regard of the enhancement cloud computing capabilities, a certain minimum cyber security standard must be provided, which is perceived as an obstacle by the City of Antwerp (Belgium).

Another 23% of the respondents perceived the launch of a grand coalition on digital skills and jobs and a new electronics industrial strategy as a difficulty.

*Q7: Overall, what are the strong and weak points of the Digital Agenda for Europe, as seen from your regional/local standpoint?*

Even though the answers of the respondents to this question vary and cannot be expressed in quantitative results as in the previous parts of this report, they all share a common base when it comes to the strong points of the Digital Agenda, notably the welcoming of a definition of goals that need to be reached. Agreement with these objectives includes the creation of a single digital market, establishing progressive access to internet, pushing for digital skills and, thus, the development of a certain level of standardisation across the Member States' ICT sectors. Furthermore, the respondents appreciated the promotion of innovation through a set of defined goals and a blueprint for an "E-economy".

Regarding the strengths of the Digital Agenda, respondents' answers were divided (in contrast to the relative unanimity on its weaknesses). Nevertheless there was consensus on the need for more guidance on behalf of the European Union in the matter of the Digital Agenda. Additionally, insufficient funds, hence their inefficient and over bureaucratic handling, were seen as reason for inadequate implementation of certain goals, for instance as regards the digital exclusion of rural areas or insufficient support for the development of next generation networks.

*Q8: Would you recommend any specific changes to the Digital Agenda for Europe, following Europe 2020's mid-term review in 2014?*

Fifteen respondents (48%) replied with an input to this question, recommending specific changes to the Digital Agenda. Ten out of those fifteen were looking to the EU for the specification of (more) concrete actions and guidance.

The Madeira Autonomous Region (Portugal) stated that the procedural requirements for funding small projects should be simplified, since they are currently as elaborate as those needed for high investment projects. The Government of Andalusia (Spain) mentioned as well that there needs to be more mandatory measures that should be adopted, especially indicating the problem of digitally deprived areas.

As mentioned by the representative of the Government of Andalusia... *uniform, mandatory measures need to be adopted for the whole of the EU rather than generic recommendations that are then implemented in a very asymmetric way according to each country and region.*

*One example could be to make mapping of all passive infrastructure likely to be used for the deployment of telecommunications networks mandatory, and to introduce a tough, streamlined regulation on the use of these cables, which could greatly facilitate deployment of ultra-fast internet access networks, particularly in the less profitable areas.*

**The Government of Andalusia, Spain**

The German region of Saxony Anhalt as well as well as the Province of Friesland (Netherlands) were calling for clear solutions for next generation networks and the removal of so-called white areas. The Basque Government (Spain) and the Economic Development Agency of the Suupohja Region (Finland) deem that there are insufficient plans for action provided by the EU. Furthermore, the Umbria Region (Italy) argues that a more coordinated approach to implementation across the various tiers of government is undoubtedly more advisable than revising the Agenda itself. However 29% of the participants did not answer this question, an additional 23% replied with a no.





# 5. Are your countries' policies relevant to your city or region?

This section of the survey includes the following three questions:

<p><i>9) Does your country's 2012 (current) National Reform Programme<sup>13</sup> (NRP) for Europe 2020 adequately respond to your regional/local needs in the policy areas covered by the Digital Agenda for Europe? If not, would you suggest any changes in your country's NRP for 2013?</i></p>
<p><i>10) Do you have the opportunity to contribute to the drafting of your NRP or national policies related to the priorities set out in the Digital Agenda for Europe, even if this takes place indirectly through organizations that represent cities and regions in your country? If yes, please state how in brief.</i></p>
<p><i>11) What sources of funding are used to finance your actions (as provided under question 3) under the Digital Agenda for Europe? In particular: what is the role of the EU Structural Funds in funding actions related to the Digital Agenda for Europe? Are other policy/financial instruments involved? Please, explain</i></p>

Table 3: List of questions included in the third thematic block of the survey

## 5.1 General Findings

In general, it can be said that National Reform Programmes tend to respond to the local/regional needs covered by the Digital Agenda for Europe. However, the issue of insufficient funding and the need for improvement of infrastructure persist. Slightly more than the half of the respondents perceived that they had sufficient opportunity to participate and contribute to the drafting of the National Reform Programmes. This included participation in working groups, ministry events as well as consulting meetings with government officials. Those who did not have this opportunity to participate were not even aware of being in the position to do so, i.e. they were not approached directly or indirectly to participate. As regards funding, two thirds of the responding LRAs are using both regional/national and EU funds simultaneously for actions undertaken under the umbrella of the Digital Agenda for Europe, whereas the remaining third only uses either regional/national or EU funds to do so.

<sup>13</sup> All available here: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm).

## 5.2 Specific Findings

*Q9: Does your country's 2012 (current) National Reform Programme<sup>14</sup> (NRP) for Europe 2020 adequately respond to your regional/local needs in the policy areas covered by the Digital Agenda for Europe? If not, would you suggest any changes in your country's NRP for 2013?*

More than half of the respondents (54%) stated that their respective National Reform Programme for Europe 2020 adequately responded to their regional or local needs in the policy areas covered by the Digital Agenda for Europe.

An, inter alia, positive example of content wise Digital Agenda integration in the National Reform Programme was mentioned by the Sunderland City Council.

The Sunderland City Council integrates expenditures on broadband and cloud infrastructure in their 2012/2013 financial strategy, balancing public debts with growth expanding ICT investments. Further the urge of schooling the unemployed youth as well as the labour market on digital literacy has been engaged upon by the City Council as well as pursuing of a long-term strategy for improving the capacity and quality of the UK's network infrastructure. All of these mentioned actions correlate to the Digital Agenda for Europe.

**The Sunderland City Council, United Kingdom**

However, the Economic Development Agency of the Suupohja Region (Finland) argued that funding should be broader and clearer. The Region of Saxony Anhalt (Germany) reported that their National Reform Programme (NRP) sets even more ambitious targets than the Digital Agenda for Europe. However, comprehensive provision with 50 MBit connections by 2018 seems rather unrealistic, since less than one sixth of the population of region of Saxony Anhalt is equipped with such connections at present. Furthermore, the Umbria Region (Italy) stated that the strategy for improving infrastructure provided by the EU could be more far reaching. Moreover, the Government of Andalusia (Spain) suggested that there should be more interaction between regional, local and national levels in order to facilitate the formulation of coherent strategies and better results.

19% of the participants in this survey reported that their NRP does not respond to their regional and local needs. The Economista (Spain) reported that obsession with controlling the public deficit overrides everything else. The Cookstown District Council described the UK National Reform Programme

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<sup>14</sup> All available here: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm).

2012 as lacking in the areas ICT or the broadband framework. Furthermore, the Vysočina Region stated that in their NRP the aspect of ICT is underrated.

Half of the remaining 27% were either not able to answer the question because they were not involved in shaping the NRP, or chose not to answer the question.

*Q10: Do you have the **opportunity to contribute** to the drafting of your **NRP** or **national policies related to the priorities set out in the Digital Agenda for Europe**, even if this takes place indirectly through organizations that represent cities and regions in your country? If yes, please state how in brief.*

More than half (52%) of the respondents reported having the opportunity to contribute to the drafting of their NRP or other policies touching upon the priorities set out in the Digital Agenda for Europe. The majority of those have either participated in working groups tasked with drafting the national digital agenda or consulting meetings with ministries. The Lodz City Hall (Poland) serves as a well integrated LRA example being part of drafting the NRP.

The Łódź City Hall attends regular meetings as part of the Linia Współpracy (Line of Cooperation) initiative organised by the Ministry of Administration and Digitalisation, divided into a number of working groups:

- working group on broadband networks financed via EU funding,
- working group on the introduction of e-government services,
- working group on e-skills and digital participation.

**The Łódź City Hall, Poland**

However, the Economic Development Agency of the Suupohja Region (Finland) reported that participation in those workshops and seminars was not always successful because of aggressive telecom lobbying, which was perceived to be influencing governmental decisions.

39% of the LRAs replied that they did not have an opportunity to contribute to the drafting of the NRP or similar national policies. These respondents said that they do not even know how to participate in these drafting processes and were not approached directly or indirectly concerning the NRP by national authorities. A further 9% of the participants did not answer this question.

*Q11: What sources of funding are used to finance **your actions** (as provided under question 3) under the **Digital Agenda for Europe**? In particular: what is the role of the EU Structural Funds in funding actions related to the **Digital Agenda for Europe**? Are other **policy/financial instruments** involved? Please, explain*

Two thirds of the respondents (67%) regarded regional/national and EU funds to be of fiscal support for actions under the Digital Agenda for Europe. The Sunderland City Council (UK) uses European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) to finance the Sunderland Software City, which is responsible for boosting the software industry in the North East of England. The Cookstown District Council (UK) stated that the ERDF contributes € 9.3 million to the € 20 million programme ‘Universal Service Commitment’, which is about supplying broadband internet access to rural populations. The Government of Catalonia (Spain) stated that there are five projects conducted in its region, which deal with the adoption of the Europe 2020 Agenda, receiving up to 50% co-financing from ERDF. The Lodz City Council (Poland) stated that fiscal support through the ERDF was essential for carrying out several projects promoting broadband access to the metropolitan area and combating digital exclusion.

The remaining third of the respondents reported exclusively using either regional/ national funds or EU funds. The Prahova Council (Romania) explained that 98% of the project on implementing an IT system managing the E-version of the agricultural sector is received from EU funds. Furthermore, the Economista from Spain explained that Structural Funds were used in order to finance actions under the Digital Agenda for Europe though these are deemed insufficient. The Economic Development Agency from Finland reported national funds being the backbone for a project called ‘Broadband for Everyone’. A similar answer was provided by the City of Malmö (Sweden) saying that regional funds were the main source of financing when it comes to actions in relation to the ‘Digital Agenda for Europe’.

# 6. Policy funding issues

This section of the survey includes the following three questions:

<i>12) Have any of the pursued goals been jeopardized due to <b>fiscal consolidation</b> policies and subsequent <b>financial difficulties</b>?</i>
<i>13) Were you <b>directly or indirectly</b> involved in the preparation of the forthcoming <b>Partnership Agreement</b> which is to be signed between your national government and the European Commission for the management of the Structural Funds under <b>the Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020</b><sup>15</sup>? If yes, please explain how in brief.</i>
<i>14) Please add <b>any further comments</b> you wish to make on the issues covered in this questionnaire.</i>

Table 4: List of questions included in the fourth thematic block of the survey

## 6.1 General Findings

Funding difficulties were experienced by the majority of LRAs due to the lasting consequences of the economic crisis. Budget cuts of 40% were experienced by one respondent making it hard to realise projects and unfortunately leading to persisting digital illiteracy in some regions. Respondents involved in the shaping of the Partnership Agreement participated in working groups or submitted consulting opinions.

## 6.2 Specific Findings

*Q12: Have any of the pursued goals been jeopardized due to **fiscal consolidation** policies and subsequent **financial difficulties***

About half of the respondents (52%) replied that that their pursued goals were jeopardized by monetary constraints caused by budget consolidation. The Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia (Spain) explained that between 2010 and 2012 the budget was cut by 40%, resulting in a slowdown of the introduction of new e-administration services and lower quality support. The Crete Region (Greece) reported an increase of digital exclusion, especially of the population in rural areas, due to fiscal consolidation policies. Furthermore, saving throughout the population has led to a decrease in revenues to telecommunication companies. The association of Basque municipalities (Spain) stated that several projects of the regional Innovation Agenda had to be terminated.

<sup>15</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/index\\_en.cfm#1](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm#1).

29% of the LRAs stated that the achievement of their set objectives was not endangered by fiscal consolidation policies. However, the Government of Catalonia (Spain) stated that even though no fiscal constraints were felt this year, it was expected that such difficulties would be experienced in 2014. The answer provided by the Tuscany Region (Italy) functions as a well formulated explanation about the consequences of fiscal constraints on the pursued goals, which applies to those LRAs that experienced such difficulties.

*As stated by the representative of the Tuscany Region...Financial difficulties and fiscal consolidation are eroding and jeopardising the availability of the funding needed to achieve the objectives. Insecure funding is leading to unsustainable programming uncertainty and the financial constraints are jeopardising the achievement of the targets and policy objectives set.*

**The Tuscany Region, Italy**

19% of the participants did not answer the question.

*Q13: Were you **directly or indirectly involved** in the preparation of the forthcoming **Partnership Agreement**, which is to be signed between your national government and the European Commission for the management of the Structural Funds under **the Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020**<sup>16</sup>? If yes, please explain how in brief.*

Half of the respondents answered that they were directly or indirectly involved in the preparation of upcoming Partnership Agreements. The Agency for Regional Development North East (Romania), the Tuscany Region (Italy) and the Crete Region (Greece) reported being involved in working groups, which were dealing with the preparation of forthcoming Partnership Agreement. The Region of Saxony Anhalt (Germany), the Lodz City Council (Poland) as well as the City of Malmö (Sweden) participated by consultations regarding the draft on the Partnership Agreement. The North East RDA from Romania reported on their involvement in detail.

The North East RDA was involved in national working groups planning the period 2014-2020, which consisted out of providing consultation, expressing views, as well as active involvement in shaping documents to include the region's needs and priorities.

**The North East RDA, Romania**

The other half of the participants stated that they were not directly or indirectly involved in the design of the Partnership Agreement. The Government of

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<sup>16</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/what/future/index\\_en.cfm#1](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm#1).

Catalonia (Spain) stated that the preparation of the latter was the task of the national government. The City of Antwerp (Belgium) explained that it was not involved in the preparation yet although was expecting to participate next year.

*Q14: Please add **any further comments** you wish to make on the issues covered in this questionnaire.*

The vast majority (80%) of the respondents did not have any further comments. However, the Cookstown District Council (UK) stated that it was important to keep in mind that business investments are dependent on telecom infrastructure and that there is an urgent need to diminish white areas in the region of Cookstown. The Government of Andalusia (Spain) commented that it was crucial to streamline decision-making on the EU level and to make those decisions compulsory for member states. The German region of Saxony Anhalt calls for a more precise blueprint regarding the Connecting Europe Facility. The Government of Catalonia (Spain) stated that there was a need for a clearer strategy on the development of local agendas in order to identify worthwhile projects. Furthermore, it was mentioned that member states should be networking more in order to exchange knowledge and learn about successful projects from other contexts.





## 7. Conclusions

The survey was based on 14 questions clustered in four sections. The following conclusions can be drawn from the answers received on these questions:

- A majority of the regions (**70%**) are working on **developing a faster and more affordable access** through next generation networks to be able to provide universal access, especially **in rural areas**. Additionally, **45% of the LRAs** reported a **lack of interoperability** when it comes to the establishment of E-governance, interconnecting different branches of the government as well as providing online services to citizens. Regions are facing **challenges** in the **area of computer skills** and digital literacy, which mainly constitutes a problem for the elderly and middle aged.
- Out of the seven pillars of the Digital Agenda of Europe, the LRAs identify enhancing **digital literacy, skills and inclusion (74%)** and **fast and ultra-fast internet access (67%)** as the most relevant aims. However, providing fast internet access is often hard to achieve due to **insufficient investment in the infrastructure**. **Research and Innovation (61%)**, perceived as boosting competitiveness of the EU, and **ICT-enabled benefits for EU society (54%)** are also relevant to the regions that have participated in this survey.
- **55% of the LRAs** report that **ICT-enabled benefits for the EU society are mostly included in their policy programmes; as well as the aspect of providing fast and ultra-fast internet access (45%)**. This highlights the need to establish a proper infrastructure in order to be able to provide the population and businesses with sufficiently fast internet access and eliminate digital exclusion.
- **58% of the LRAs** have or are currently **working on a digital agenda** functioning as a blueprint for implementing measures, for instance on promoting broadband access in their respective region. Furthermore, **52% the respondents** state that they are currently **working on improving interoperability and e-government** by developing new applications that are dealing with e services.
- **Connecting Europe Facility** is deemed to be the **most relevant transformative action for LRAs (58%)**, illustrating a tendency towards boosting public digital service infrastructures. A **broadband regulatory environment** and sufficient funding is **relevant to 55% of the LRAs** as a transformative action. Nevertheless, 26% of the LRAs are experiencing

difficulties in accelerating cloud computing due to cuts in budgets. Furthermore, developing public digital services, broadband regulatory environments and Connecting Europe Facility are perceived to be difficult to achieve by 22% of the LRAs, due to a lack of guidance by the EU.

- Overall, LRAs rate the **definition of goals, the aspect of innovation and keeping the EU on the competitive edge as well as the creation of an information society as the strong points** of the Digital Agenda for Europe 2020. On the negative side, LRAs **complain about too little guidance** provided by the EU in some cases as well as **insufficient funding** which results in digital exclusion of rural areas. Therefore, **48% of the LRAs** recommend **specific changes** to the Digital Agenda, asking inter alia for **more guidance on concrete actions as well as simplified procedural requirements and clear solutions on next generation networks**.
- **54% of the LRAs are satisfied with the response of their National Reform Programme (NRP)** to their local/ regional needs in the policy areas covered by the Digital Agenda for Europe. The 23% of the LRAs stating that their National Reform Programme is not adequately addressing local/regional needs attribute this to the fact that respective national programmes do not include aspects of the Digital Agenda.
- **51% of the respondents** report having had the **opportunity to contribute to the drafting of their NRP**, mostly in the form of submitting consulting opinions or participation in working groups. **39% of the LRAs** do not have this opportunity mainly due to **not being aware of the chance to contribute**.
- When it comes to the sources of funding **68% of the Local/ Regional Authorities** state that **regional and EU funds are of fiscal support**. The remaining **32% of LRAs** report **either EU funds or national/ regional funds** to be the main source of financing. **64%** of those responding to the question of whether **pursued goals were jeopardized by fiscal consolidation replied with a yes**. Consequences appear in form of a slowdown of project implementation and an increase in digital exclusion, especially in remote areas.
- Due to a **cut in EU funding, respectively from € 9.2 billion to € 1 billion** will result in even **harsher conditions for European Regional and Local Authorities** in the accomplishment of the goals set by the Digital Agenda for Europe.

- **60% of the LRAs** report on **being involved** in the **preparation of the Partnership Agreement** by participation in working groups or submitting an advisory opinion or comment.
- In general it can be said that the change of the focus of the updated agenda **from network expansion**, hence broadening of internet access over the whole European Union, **to facilitated framework conditions and e-governance** will make it **even harder for digitally deprived regions** to be equipped with the necessary ICT paraphernalia in order **to keep up with the rest of the EU**.



## **8. Annex I – List of Respondents**

Number	Country	Organisation	Name	Mail	Level
1	Romania	Dâmbovița County Council (Consiliul Județean Dâmbovița)	Natalia Ceptureanu	<a href="mailto:cjdinf@cjdr.ro">cjdinf@cjdr.ro</a>	Province
2	Portugal	Ferreira do Alentejo Town Council (Câmara Municipal de Ferreira do Alentejo)	Aníbal Reis Costa, Sérgio Seco	<a href="mailto:s.seco@cm-ferreiraalentejo.pt">s.seco@cm-ferreiraalentejo.pt</a> <a href="mailto:geral@cmferreira-alentejo.pt">geral@cmferreira-alentejo.pt</a>	City
3	Portugal	Batalha Town Council (Câmara Municipal da Batalha)	António Lucas	<a href="mailto:antonio.lucas@cm-batalha.pt">antonio.lucas@cm-batalha.pt</a>	City
4	Poland	Marshal's Office of the Lodzkie Region (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Łódzkiego)	Paweł Nowak, Witold Stępień, Małgorzata Wochońska	<a href="mailto:pawel.nowak@lodzkie.pl">pawel.nowak@lodzkie.pl</a> <a href="mailto:malgorzata.wochowska@lodzkie.pl">malgorzata.wochowska@lodzkie.pl</a> <a href="mailto:marszalek@lodzkie.pl">marszalek@lodzkie.pl</a> <a href="mailto:marek.gajewski@lodzkie.pl">marek.gajewski@lodzkie.pl</a> <a href="mailto:witold.stepien@lodzkie.pl">witold.stepien@lodzkie.pl</a>	Province
5	Spain	Economista	Laureano Lázaro Araujo	<a href="mailto:aureanolazaro@hotmail.com">aureanolazaro@hotmail.com</a>	Other
6	Spain	Regional Government of Extremadura (Gobierno de Extremadura)	Ana Atanet	<a href="mailto:aatanet@gobex.es">aatanet@gobex.es</a> <a href="mailto:dgiyae.presidencia@gobex.es">dgiyae.presidencia@gobex.es</a> <a href="mailto:jcmartinez@gobex.es">jcmartinez@gobex.es</a> <a href="mailto:raul.lorenzo@juntaextremadura.es">raul.lorenzo@juntaextremadura.es</a> <a href="mailto:sg.reei@gobex.es">sg.reei@gobex.es</a>	Region
7	Germany	Saxony-Anhalt (Sachsen-Anhalt)	Theo Struhkamp	<a href="mailto:Theo.Struhkamp@stk.sachsen-anhalt.de">Theo.Struhkamp@stk.sachsen-anhalt.de</a>	Region
8	Italy	Umbria Region (Regione Umbria)	Claudio Tiriduzzi, Francesca Rondelli	<a href="mailto:progcomunitaria@regione.umbria.it">progcomunitaria@regione.umbria.it</a> <a href="mailto:ctiriduzzi@regione.umbria.it">ctiriduzzi@regione.umbria.it</a>	Region
9	Spain	Basque Government (Gobierno Vasco)	Aitor Urzelai Inza, Ana Isabel Vitórica Leoz	<a href="mailto:anavitorica@ej-gv.es">anavitorica@ej-gv.es</a>	Region
10	Finland	Economic Development Agency of Suupohja Region	Anne-Mari Leppinen	<a href="mailto:annemari.leppinen@suupohja.fi">annemari.leppinen@suupohja.fi</a>	Association of cities and regions

Number	Country	Organisation	Name	Mail	Level
11	United Kingdom	Sunderland City Council	Jill Laverick	<a href="mailto:Conn.Crawford@sunderland.gov.uk">Conn.Crawford@sunderland.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Jill.Laverick@sunderland.gov.uk">Jill.Laverick@sunderland.gov.uk</a>	City
12	United Kingdom	Cookstown District Council, Northern Ireland	Fiona McKeown	<a href="mailto:Fiona.McKeown@cookstown.gov.uk">Fiona.McKeown@cookstown.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Adrian.McCreesh@cookstown.gov.uk">Adrian.McCreesh@cookstown.gov.uk</a>	City
13	Portugal	Madeira Autonomous Region (Região Autónoma da Madeira)	Maria Fernanda Dias Cardoso	<a href="mailto:sa.drace.vp@govmadeira.pt">sa.drace.vp@govmadeira.pt</a> <a href="mailto:fernandacardoso.vp@govmadeira.pt">fernandacardoso.vp@govmadeira.pt</a>	Region
14	Belgium	Antwerp city (Stad Antwerpen)	Milan Rutten	<a href="mailto:Milan.Rutten@stad.Antwerpen.be">Milan.Rutten@stad.Antwerpen.be</a> <a href="mailto:Rebecca.DeBacker@Vespa.Antwerpen.be">Rebecca.DeBacker@Vespa.Antwerpen.be</a>	City
15	Greece	Crete Region (Περιφέρειας Κρήτης)	Manolis Stratakis, Christine Assimakopoulou	<a href="mailto:asix@forthnetgroup.gr">asix@forthnetgroup.gr</a> <a href="mailto:stratakis@forthnetgroup.gr">stratakis@forthnetgroup.gr</a>	Other
16	Spain	Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya)	Daniel Marco	<a href="mailto:daniel.marco@gencat.cat">daniel.marco@gencat.cat</a>	Region
17	Finland	Regional Council of North Karelia (Pohjois-Karjalan maakuntaliitto)	Jarmo Heiskanen	<a href="mailto:etunimi.sukunimi@pohjoiskarjala.fi">etunimi.sukunimi@pohjoiskarjala.fi</a> <a href="mailto:jarmo.heiskanen@pohjoiskarjala.fi">jarmo.heiskanen@pohjoiskarjala.fi</a>	Region
18	Sweden	NetPort Blekinge (South of Sweden)	Cissi Dahl	<a href="mailto:cissi.dahl@netport.se">cissi.dahl@netport.se</a>	Association of cities and regions
19	Romania	Prahova County Council (Consiliul judetean Prahova)	Cristina Vasile	<a href="mailto:cristina.vasile@cjph.ro">cristina.vasile@cjph.ro</a>	County
20	Spain	Governement of Andalusia (Junta de Andalucía)	Maria Sol Calzado García, Celia Rosell Martí	<a href="mailto:celia.rosell@juntadeandalucia.es">celia.rosell@juntadeandalucia.es</a> <a href="mailto:alfonso.garrido@juntadeandalucia.es">alfonso.garrido@juntadeandalucia.es</a> <a href="mailto:sgacex.cprei@juntadeandalucia.es">sgacex.cprei@juntadeandalucia.es</a>	Region
21	Czech Republic	Vysočina Region (Kraj Vysočina)	Václav Jákim	Jachim.V@kr-vysocina.cz	Region

Number	Country	Organisation	Name	Mail	Level
22	Poland	Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze Region in Warsaw (Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Mazowieckiego w Warszawie)	Marek Ogonowski, Katarzyna Mańska	<a href="mailto:katarzyna.manska@mazovia.pl">katarzyna.manska@mazovia.pl</a> <a href="mailto:m.ogonowski@armsa.pl">m.ogonowski@armsa.pl</a>	Province
23	Spain	Extremadura Regional Parliament (Parlamento de Extremadura)	Eugenia Romero Vazquianez	<a href="mailto:meromero@asambleax.es">meromero@asambleax.es</a>	Region
24	Czech Republic	Purdubice Municipality (Statutární město Pardubice)	Michal Král, Tomáš Cabrnach	<a href="mailto:michal.kral@mmp.cz">michal.kral@mmp.cz</a> <a href="mailto:Miloslava.Matejkova@mmp.cz">Miloslava.Matejkova@mmp.cz</a> <a href="mailto:Tomas.Cabrnach@mmp.cz">Tomas.Cabrnach@mmp.cz</a>	City
25	Spain	Association of Basque Municipalities (Asociación Vasca de Municipios)	Esther Ibarluzea	<a href="mailto:barlucea.e@eudel.net">barlucea.e@eudel.net</a>	Association of cities and regions
26	Italy	Tuscany Region (Regione Toscana)	Laura Castellani, Sauro Del Turco	<a href="mailto:laura.castellani@regione.toscana.it">laura.castellani@regione.toscana.it</a> <a href="mailto:sauro.delturco@regione.toscana.it">sauro.delturco@regione.toscana.it</a>	Region
27	Poland	Łódź city council (Urząd Miasta Łodzi)	Ewelina Izydorczyk-Lewy	<a href="mailto:e.izydorczyk@uml.lodz.pl">e.izydorczyk@uml.lodz.pl</a>	City
28	Romania	Agency for Regional Development North-East (Agentia pentru Dezvoltare Regionala Nord-Est)	Gabriela Macoveiu, Roxana Mocanu	<a href="mailto:gmacoveiu@adnrdest.ro">gmacoveiu@adnrdest.ro</a> <a href="mailto:officebruxelles@adnrdest.ro">officebruxelles@adnrdest.ro</a>	Other
29	Netherlands	Province of Friesland (Provincie Fryslân)	Martijn Ledegang	<a href="mailto:m.d.ledegang@fryslan.nl">m.d.ledegang@fryslan.nl</a>	Province
30	Spain	Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia (Comunidad Autónoma de la Región de Murcia)	Eduardo Linares Gil, Remedios Viviente	<a href="mailto:eduardo.linares@carm.es">eduardo.linares@carm.es</a> <a href="mailto:mremedios.viviente@carm.es">mremedios.viviente@carm.es</a> <a href="mailto:carmenmaria.sandoval@carm.es">carmenmaria.sandoval@carm.es</a>	Region
31	Sweden	City of Malmö (Malmö stad)	Per-Olof Jansson	<a href="mailto:per-olof.jansson@malmo.se">per-olof.jansson@malmo.se</a> <a href="mailto:bo.kallmark@malmo.se">bo.kallmark@malmo.se</a>	City



## **9. Annex II – Local/ Regional initiatives reported in the contributions**

Country	Organisation	Initiative
Belgium	Antwerp City	<b>Digital communication strategy:</b> The aim is to give all users digital access to the city in as personalised and relevant a way as possible - so they can find out about services and products, be inspired or have a conversation with the city itself - wherever, whenever and however they want. Users can count on having a high-quality digital experience, which is in line with international standards and trends.
Belgium	Antwerp City	<b>Digi points:</b> To address the problem of digital illiteracy, public access points are being brought online for free. These access points are provided in such places as libraries, community centres or schools in digitally deprived areas.
Germany	Saxony-Anhalt	<b>Saxony-Anhalt 2020 Digital Strategy:</b> This strategy puts the development of the ICT infrastructure in the focus, in order to be able to support the region with a future oriented administration.
Germany	Saxony-Anhalt	<b>ICT innovation offensive:</b> This initiative is about identifying strategic themes for the economy and initiating cooperation, raising the profile of site-based advantages internally and externally.
Italy	The Umbria Region	<b>Strategic Plan for an Information Society:</b> The purpose is to set guidelines for the development of cohesion and inclusion, for the growth of the knowledge, the enhancement of information and culture heritage, for the coordinated development of public information systems according to regional models of institutional cooperation between all government authorities, to ensure the coordination of information and computer data among public administrations on the region.
Italy	The Umbria Region	<b>Regional ICT plan (POT-PT):</b> This plan is launched for the period 2008-2010 and updated for the period 2011-2013, which is aimed at breaking down the first-level digital divide and creating a next-generation fibre optic infrastructure, with a total investment of EUR 7.5 million.
Italy	The Umbria Region	<b>RI-Umbria ( one-stop-shops):</b> This initiative offers digital identity management for citizens and business, access to e-services as well as electronical payment possibilities.
Italy	The Tuscany Region	<b>Tuscany Digital Agenda:</b> The agenda focuses on three main issues, namely technological infrastructure and service platforms, competitiveness and digital citizenship and digital simplification and administration.
Poland	Łódź City Council	<b>Łódzkie Regional Development Strategy 2020:</b> This strategy deals with the development of e-services and access to broadband internet.
Poland	Łódź City Council	Programme for the <b>Development of an Information Society in the Łódź region:</b> The priorities of the Programme lie in the development of Human capital for e-development, economic growth based on innovative ICT solutions as well as citizen friendly online services.

Country	Organisation	Initiative
Poland	Łódź City Council	<b>Łódzkie region eHealth Strategy:</b> The aim is to cover the interaction between patients and health-service providers, institution-to-institution transmission of data, or peer-to-peer communication between patients or health professionals.
Portugal	Madeira Autonomous Region	<b>Madeira Action Plan for communication and information:</b> This action plan was developed on the basis of the national strategy and the global strategy for rationalising and reducing the ICT costs of public administration, manifested in 11 measures.
Portugal	Madeira Autonomous Region	<b>RTDI &amp; I action plan:</b> This plan set out a strategy for promoting research, technology development and innovation in various reference areas including health, environmental sustainability, energy, transport and climate change, the sustainable management and maintenance of infrastructure, industrial technology and innovation, IT technology and communication, tourism and regional development and innovation.
Romania	Prahova County Council	<b>SIUGRC (Integated town planning system for managing relations with the general public):</b> This project is set up to allow easier communication between citizens and Prahova County Council, provides the following e-services such as finding out information, downloading forms, consulting town planning and land use documents, consulting legislation in the area of town planning and land use as well as tracking applications and sending notification on personal dossiers.
Spain	Basque Government	<b>Banda Zabala Project:</b> The aim of the Banda Zabala project is to encourage new generation ultra-fast broadband networks to make them more easily available and easy to use by harnessing the multiplying effect of ICTs in the economic and social development of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.
Spain	Basque Government	<b>GAITEK Programme:</b> The purpose of this initiative is to improve the competitiveness of enterprises through the promotion of projects based on R&D activities. These projects must meet the challenge of developing new products.
Spain	Government of Andalusia	<b>NEREA network:</b> This is a project of the Council of Innovation, Science and the company of Together of Andalusia, destined to interconnect the different present public administrations in Andalusia.
Spain	Government of Andalusia	<b>AndaluciaCERT:</b> The regional ICT security blueprint aims to reinforce management and proactive response to the risks associated with cybercrime and security attacks, in coordination and collaboration with other bodies.
Spain	Association of Basque Municipalities	<b>2015 Digital Agenda (AD15):</b> At regional level, policies are being implemented under the 2015 Digital Agenda (AD15) promoted by the Basque Government around four goals: Digital community; e-Enterprise; Advanced and accessible digital services; Infrastructure.

Country	Organisation	Initiative
Spain	Association of Basque Municipalities	<b>Local Innovation Agenda (AIL):</b> This initiative aims at creating added value through innovation in forms of government, and in the management and delivery of services by our local authorities, using ITC as levers for change.
Sweden	City of Malmö	<b>Strategy for eSociety:</b> This strategy aims at the full deployment of an eSociety including the following: e-business, e-health services, e-payments, e-procurement, e-education, e-banking, e-democracy, e-billing.
The Netherlands	Province of Friesland	<b>A Next Generation Access Network (NGA):</b> This document contains the framework and guidelines for rolling out an NGA to all households in the province's white areas. An investment plan is currently being drawn up on the basis of this document.
United Kingdom	Sunderland City Council	Sunderland has an established <b>Digital Inclusion programme</b> . This has resulted in the establishment of 60 community based venues that provide access to ICT facilities and Digital skills training within the community.
United Kingdom	Cookstown District Council	<b>Universal Service Commitment:</b> The UK government aims to ensure that 90% of homes and businesses in each local council area have access to superfast broadband and for everyone in the UK to have access to at least 2Mbps by 2015.

## **10. Annex III – Box of good practices**

**Policy challenges and responses at regional and local level**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Good examples</b>
Spain	The Government of Andalusia	The Andalusian regional government's Red de Energia (energy network) is a body which centralises procurement of energy supply for the whole regional government. At the same time the energy network is optimising energy supply in an environmentally friendly way, taking harmful emissions to the environment into account.
Italy	The Umbria Region	Umbria's Regional ICT plan (also known as POT PT), launched for the period 2008-2010 and updated for the period 2011-2013 is aimed at breaking down the first-level digital divide and creating a next-generation fibre optic infrastructure, with a total investment of EUR 7.5 million. This funds are aimed at enabling the use of broadband and wireless systems, especially in areas with regional economic interest for SME access and IT infrastructure.
Belgium	Antwerp City	The digi points are organised in deprived areas and pay particular attention to disadvantaged groups. The city is investigating whether these free computer sites can be extended. Civil society or intermediate organisations, such as senior citizens' associations or organisations for the poor, are also encouraged to set up accessible workplaces.
Spain	The Government of Catalonia	In order to attain the objectives of the local digital agenda, the Government of Catalonia has promoted a process of transformation that aims to provide Catalonia and the government itself with a centralised ICT management model that acts as a driving force for the business sector and at the same time implies improved efficiency of the administration itself and facilitates the creation of more solid and efficient state structures.
Poland	The Marshal's Office of the Mazowsze Region	The e-Development Strategy focuses on activities aiming to even out disparities in the development of ICT, particularly in areas with low e-development potential. This objective will be realised through the implementation of information projects and activities for the development of e-services available to the public and businesses with a regional and local dimension.

**Policy challenges and responses at regional and local level**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Good examples</b>
Italy	The Tuscany Region	Tuscany plans to close the digital divide in the region by 2014. It is investing in faster connection services and the design of tools to support the activation of connection services by telecommunications operators. It is also making the Network of assisted internet access points available to citizens and businesses. Qualified operators carry out digital literacy activities and help inexperienced people use the Public Administration's digital services.

**The relevance of the “Digital Agenda for Europe” for European cities and regions**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Good examples</b>
Belgium	Antwerp City	The City of Antwerp striving to achieve modern customer management, by a digital approach, which is a crucial part of this undertaking. It offers citizens the opportunity to have an administrative request handled completely digitally smoothly, without having to come in person to a counter.
Italy	The Tuscany Region	<i>As stated by the representative of the Tuscany Region ... continuing to break down the digital divide through the roll-out of broadband is not easy within a still fragmented regulatory framework and in a context of severe economic constraints; and the same goes for the development of cloud computing.</i>
Spain	The Government of Andalusia	<i>As mentioned by the representative of the Government of Andalusia... uniform, mandatory measures need to be adopted for the whole of the EU rather than generic recommendations that are then implemented in a very asymmetric way according to each country and region. One example could be to make mapping of all passive infrastructure likely to be used for the deployment of telecommunications networks mandatory, and to introduce a tough, streamlined regulation on the use of these cables, which could greatly facilitate deployment of ultra-fast internet access networks, particularly in the less profitable areas.</i>

Are your countries' policies relevant to your city or region?		
Country	Organisation	Good examples
United Kingdom	The Sunderland City Council	The Sunderland City Council integrates expenditures on broadband and cloud infrastructure in their 2012/2013 financial strategy, balancing public debts with growth expanding ICT investments. Further the urge of schooling the unemployed youth as well as the labour market on digital literacy has been engaged upon by the City Council as well as pursuing of a long-term strategy for improving the capacity and quality of the UK's network infrastructure. All of these mentioned actions correlate to the Digital Agenda for Europe.
Poland	The Łódź City Hall	A nice example, as far as, the participation at the NRP drafting goes is provided by the Łódź City Hall, which attends regular meetings as part of the Linia Współpracy (Line of Cooperation) initiative organised by the Ministry of Administration and Digitalisation, divided into a number of working groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- working group on broadband networks financed via EU funding,</li> <li>- working group on the introduction of e-government services,</li> <li>- working group on e-skills and digital participation.</li> </ul>

Policy funding issues		
Country	Organisation	Good examples
Italy	The Tuscany Region	As stated by the representative of the Tuscany Region...Financial difficulties and fiscal consolidation are eroding and jeopardising the availability of the funding needed to achieve the objectives. Insecure funding is leading to unsustainable programming uncertainty and the financial constraints are jeopardising the achievement of the targets and policy objectives set.
Romania	The North-East RDA	The North East RDA was involved in national working groups planning the period 2014-2020, which consisted out of providing consultation, expressing views, as well as active involvement in shaping documents to include the region's needs and priorities.