

Turning problems into opportunities in urban areas

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Currently, about 55 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 68 percent by 2050, according to a UN report. With several challenges posed by continued urbanization, successful management of cities has become more important than ever.

To improve the quality of life in urban environments, the concept of

smart cities is used in various areas like energy and transportation. The EU-funded MAtchUP project is a case in point. Progress is made in the transformation of cities with MAtchUP's smart city solutions that involve [innovative technologies](#) in the energy, mobility and ICT sectors. For example, in Valencia, one of the three cities where MAtchUP will deploy large-scale demonstration projects, digital platform VLCi is being used by local authority managers.

A news release on the project website reports that "Valencia has been declared as the first Spanish City 100percent Smart, thanks to its digital Platform Vlci. Integrating altogether the main local services, this ICT tool will boost the quality of life of its citizens, cut the city expenses and improve its efficiency."

The VLCi Platform website summarizes the main functions of the ICT tool. It gathers data from Valencia's City Council Services' sensors and [information systems](#), and manages vast amounts of information from multiple sources. It also involves information storage and analysis through the use of Big Data, and information availability where dashboards are developed in order to help city service managers draw conclusions for easy and rapid decision-making.

MAtchUP's other cities are Dresden (Germany) and Antalya (Turkey). The project will also support the replication and upscaling plans in Ostend (Belgium), Herzliya (Israel), Skopje (North Macedonia) and Kerava (Finland). The MAtchUP project is one of several EU-funded projects focusing on smart cities and communities.

As part of a study tour featuring the good practices and innovative solutions implemented in Valencia, the MAtchUP team and other stakeholders visited several places of interest related to mobility, energy and ICT activities. Starting with Valencia's traffic management center, project partners examined how the traffic in the [city](#) is monitored, the

flow of vehicles is controlled and traffic incidents are managed, as noted in the same news release. The study tour participants were also informed about Decidim València, a project that focuses on tools and mechanisms for citizen participation through dialog and digitalization, decentralization and co-designed working groups. In addition, the attendees visited the Federico García Lorca school in Valencia that takes part in the 50/50 program in the field of energy. The news item states: "This program is a resource-saving action focused on the promotion of an innovative business model such as Energy and economic savings in schools. This will teach the children in Valencia to love and to respect the world around them using energy, water and gas."

Now in its second year, the MAtchUP (MAximizing the UPscaling and replication potential of high level urban transformation strategies) [project](#) was set up with the overall aim of creating a prosperous and more liveable urban environment for communities.

More information: MAtchUP project website: www.matchup-project.eu/

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