Six European cities will use artificial intelligence to move towards carbon neutrality

Helsinki, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Paris Region, Stavanger and Tallinn will challenge companies to develop innovative solutions on the fields of energy and mobility

Paris, 17 jan 2020 — AI4Cities is a three-year EU-funded project bringing together leading European cities looking for artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and meet their climate commitments. Helsinki (Finland), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Copenhagen (Denmark), Paris Region (France), Stavanger (Norway) and Tallinn (Estonia) are the six European cities and regions involved in this project that has just kicked off.

Through AI4Cities, these cities and regions will go through a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) process, an innovation procurement tool that enables the public sector to steer the development of new solutions directly towards its needs. First, the buying authorities will define the needs and requirements of those solutions on the energy and the mobility fields they would like to see developed in order to move towards carbon neutrality. Then, they will challenge startups, SMEs, bigger companies and other relevant stakeholders to design innovative solutions applying the use of AI and related enabling technologies, such as 5G, Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing and big data applications. The total funding amount to be divided among the selected suppliers throughout the whole PCP process is 4.6 million euros.

"Cities and regions have a lot to say and do when it comes to climate action. We are very well placed to support our national governments in achieving the climate goals. AI4Cities shows our leadership and our willingness to use the power of pre-commercial procurement to boost innovation, artificial intelligence and sustainability in Europe," said Kaisa Sibelius, coordinator of the AI4Cities project and project manager at Forum Virium Helsinki.

AI4Cities is divided into five main phases: one preparatory phase (0), three standard PCP phases (1-3) and one final impact assessment and follow up phase (4). During the preparation phase (Phase 0), the procuring cities will organise a series of activities – roundtables, workshops, and matchmaking events, amongst others – aimed at ensuring the open market consultation is an ambitious co-creation exercise. The PCP process will consist of a solution design phase (Phase 1), a prototype phase (Phase 2) and a prototype testing phase (Phase 3). AI4Cities will reach the supply side to select and fund a minimum of 40 contractors (20 for the energy challenge and 20 for the mobility challenge) who, during Phase 1, will present their reports with a concept design, results of their feasibility studies and conclusions. Then, a minimum of 20 contractors (ten for each of the two challenges) will be invited to develop their prototypes in Phase 2. Finally, a minimum of six contractors (three and three) will make it into Phase 3 where a series of larger scale pilots will be undertaken. To maximise the potential impact of the project, a group of cities will be recruited to follow the PCP process and support the uptake of the outcomes. The final stage (Phase 4) will focus on promoting PCP results for interested parties

The participants of AI4Cities are six like-minded cities with strong experience in using 'Smart Cities' solutions, IoT and open data to address citizens' needs, and ICLEI, a global network of cities pushing sustainable urban development forward.

AI in the context of energy and mobility

With over 70% of EU citizens now living in urban areas, traffic congestions and inefficient transport systems still persist across the continent and account for 24% of GHG emissions in European cities. AI technologies have already proven they can help optimise traditional transport systems and processes to have a more positive (potential) impact on the environment.

Energy – crucial for cities' infrastructure, heating, cooling, security and light – is the biggest polluting source, accounting for 58% of GHG emissions. In this context, AI technologies can be issued for storage needs, more efficient energy uses and the integration of renewable sources. Furthermore AI can help citizens to better understand how their energy consumption impacts their carbon footprint and give them tools that can facilitate the change.

For more information, contact us:
Meritxell Díaz, media contact, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
meritxell.diaz@iclei.org
Jon Jonoski, communications officer, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability jon.jonoski@iclei.org

Pictures can be downloaded here: 01, 02, 03 and 04
Website (under construction): www.ai4cities.eu