

From start-up initiative to legal entity

With OASC becoming a non-profit association, benefits for member cities will amplify

25 January 2018 - Three years after its foundation, Open & Agile Smart Cities (OASC) has incorporated as a legal entity. OASC is now a non-profit association under Belgian law (“vereniging zonder winstoogmerk”; vzw). Based in Brussels, OASC serves as a focused, pragmatic link between the national OASC member networks of cities and international institutions in Europe and beyond, including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a United Nations body, as well as to other standards-developing organisations and fora, including ETSI and ISO.

Shaping the smart city market

OASC is an international smart city network. 117 cities from 24 countries and regions have joined so far with the goal to create and shape the nascent global marketplace for smart city data and services. OASC is already today at the forefront of tomorrow’s specifications and emerging standards for city data, services, and technology – and we work based on city needs with support from the industry.

Together, we strive to establish so-called *Minimal Interoperability Mechanisms* (MIMs) to create such a smart city market. MIMs are simple and transparent mechanisms, ready to use in any city, regardless of size or capacity. By implementing APIs, data models, and platform elements based on OASC MIMs, cities increase the speed and openness of innovation and development, while de-risking investments, decreasing cost, and improving efficiency. In essence, MIMs allow cities and regions to engage in global digital transformation on their own terms.

Serving the needs of cities

OASC’s incorporation will serve, first and foremost, the 117 cities in the network. Being a legal entity will allow OASC to represent cities in various international contexts. It will also allow initiating and partnering with our members in international innovation and research projects, such as the SynchroniCity Internet of Things Large Scale Pilot funded under the European Commission’s H2020.

United in a vision of supporting cities in their digital transformation, OASC was incorporated and will be further supported by its founding members Aarhus University (Denmark), Future Cities Catapult (United Kingdom), imec (Belgium), and Business Tampere (Finland).

Martin Brynskov, research director of AU Smart Cities at Aarhus University and chair of OASC: “OASC is a focused response to the digital urban transition, which is one of the key challenges of the world right now and in the foreseeable future. While IoT and Smart Cities & Communities may offer new possibilities, it also introduces new risks, of vendor lock-in, failed investments, security breaches, social inequality, and global forces disrupting local economic development and well-being. With OASC, cities and the partners around them can shape a robust, common market based on simple mechanisms.”

Jarmo Eskelinen, CITO of Future Cities Catapult and founding board member of OASC:
“Cities are facing many challenges today and OASC is one piece of the puzzle in solving some of the challenges the digital transition brings with it. The foundation of Open & Agile Smart Cities empowers cities to shape open standards of tomorrow and create new market possibilities thanks to interoperability of systems.”

Harri Airaksinen, CEO of Business Tampere and founding board member of OASC: *“As a new complementary network of cities OASC is a great opportunity to all cities and urban regions to share experiences, deliver the best practices and enlarge the markets for the companies offering smart solutions and innovative services. OASC will certainly become an excellent instrument in order to improve the quality of living in cities, create new markets and scale up the business.”*

Pieter Ballon, director of imec-SMIT and founding board member of OASC: *“The idea behind OASC is to bring together different partners – cities, citizens, research, and industry – to make open innovation a reality and our cities more livable again.”*

Connected Smart Cities Conference 2018

At our annual Connected Smart Cities Conference 2018 on 11 January, the OASC community gathered with more than 400 registered participants, sharing experiences, finding common ways forward. European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya Gabriel delivered the welcome address, available [here](#). Next year's edition of the Connected Smart Cities Conference is already in the making. Further details will be announced shortly.

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The OASC office is located at the *Quadruple Helix Headquarters* (QHHQ) at Pleinlaan 9, 1st floor, 1050 Brussels, Belgium. The QHHQ is a meeting space for citizen-centred, digital innovation and is also home to OASC partner organisations ENoLL (European Network of Living Labs), BDVA (Big Data Value Association), and Creative Ring.