

# THE SMART FLANDERS PROGRAM

*Supporting the 13 largest cities of Flanders, Belgium*

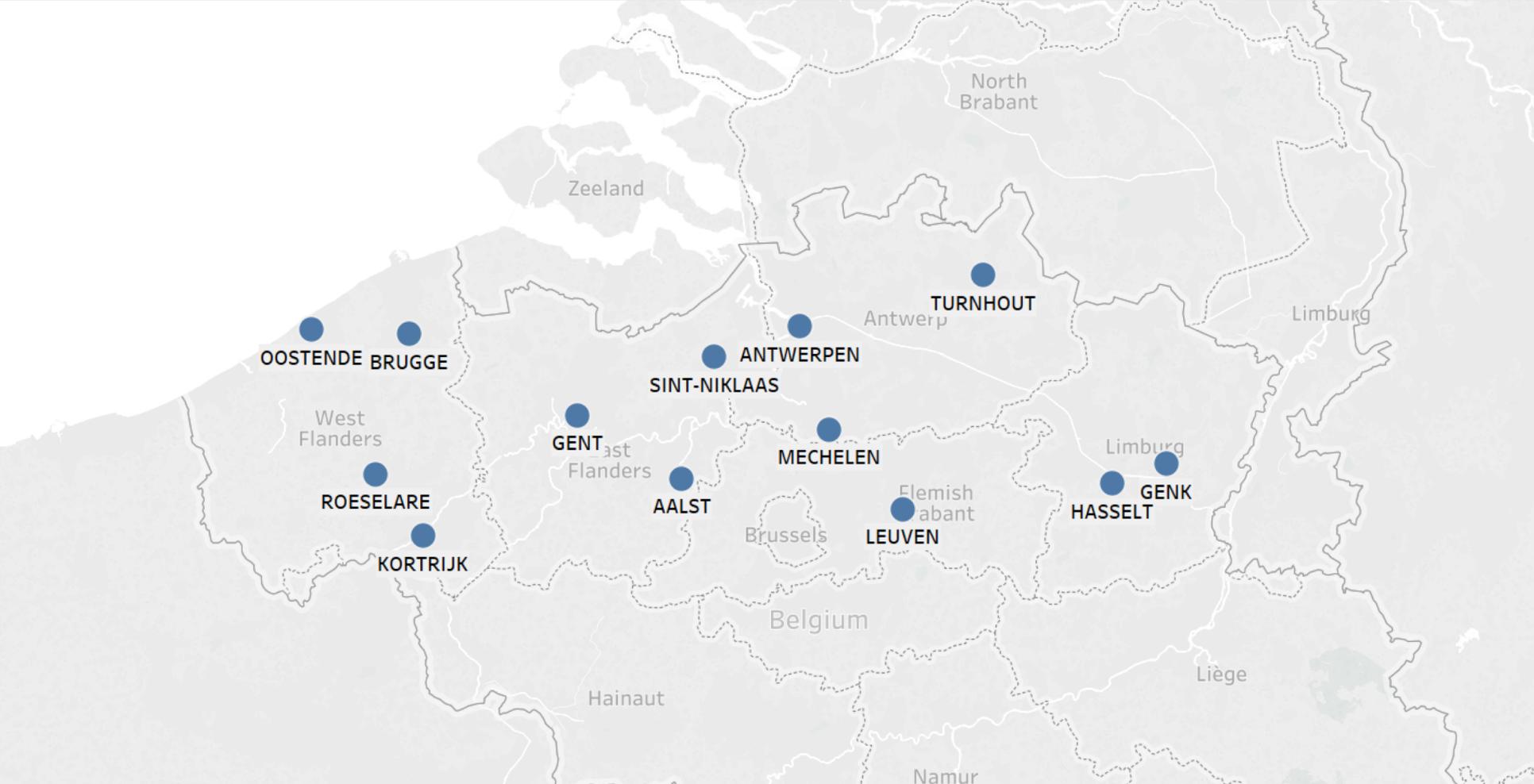
Start from an urban challenge, formulated by cities

Explore how open data can play a part

Support them on a strategic and technical level  
based on interdisciplinary research experience

Funded by Flemish Government for 3y, coordinated by imec





# NEED FOR ALIGNMENT

*And a common framework between cities*

**Open Data Charter** with 20 principles, setting out the ambition for the coming years at the strategic and technical level, **adopted** by the 13 cities and the Flemish Government

An **Open Data Checklist** to facilitate the development of sustainable open data policies

A document with **model clauses** public administrations can use when procuring solutions, creating a more level playing field



# MATURITY CHECK

*Assessing the maturity of cities related to smart cities, technology, innovation, working with data...*

Goal: make a comparative estimation of the cities' maturity vis-à-vis

- Vision and strategy
- Organisation and management
- Technology
- Data

Written survey and document analysis + in-depth interviews with city administrations resulting in 13+1 “portraits” of the situation (2017 and 2019)



# DATA PILOTS

*Explore the role of (open) data for specific urban challenges*

Pilot on opening real-time off-street **parking garage occupancy** led to model clauses being developed, to avoid lock-in of data

Pilot on data related to physical **accessibility** of government buildings led to a new trajectory in the Flemish Government to move to a more open database

Pilot on **measuring crowds** in the city led to a manual with definitions co-created with the cities and companies to be used in procurement





## CONTACT

<https://smart.flanders.be>  
[nils.walravens@imec.be](mailto:nils.walravens@imec.be)



BACK-UPS

# OPEN DATA CHECKLIST

## TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF OPEN DATA POLICIES

6 areas:

1. Problem (re)definition
2. Capacity and resources
3. Organizational culture
4. Governance
5. Partnerships
6. Risks



# OPEN DATA CHECKLIST

## PROBLEM (RE)DEFINITION

1. **Frame context and cause:** do not just open data to open data, but start from a clear and concrete policy challenge.
2. **Define problem and goals:** make the policy goal more concrete by establishing measurable KPIs. Open data will never completely solve a problem but can be instrumental in speeding the process along.
3. **Do “reuser research”:** understand the needs and pains of potential reusers by engaging in a transparent dialogue.
4. **Redefine the problem:** evaluate the initially identified problem and do not hesitate to rescope or redefine it if necessary.
5. **Create an overview of the data:** understand which data are available within the public organization and who is responsible for them.



# OPEN DATA CHECKLIST

## CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

1. **Build data infrastructure:** publishing data means the basic data infrastructure needs to function well first. For smaller municipalities this cost can potentially be shared through intergovernmental collaboration.
2. **Develop expertise:** working with (open) data requires skills that are today not always present within public administrations. Training and knowledge building in this area is important.
3. **Provide sufficient resources:** open data requires an initial investment and a translation into processes within the organization. This requires sufficient means and personnel.



# OPEN DATA CHECKLIST

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

1. **Apply shared principles:** whenever possible strive for using shared frameworks so that all partners understand terminology in the same way.
2. **Stimulate “believers”:** identify public workers in the administration that see the potential of open data and actively involve them in implementing a policy.
3. **Be open for feedback:** reusers of your data will provide you with feedback on data quality, availability and so on. The organization needs to be prepared to tackle constructive feedback.



# OPEN DATA CHECKLIST

## GOVERNANCE

1. **Guard standards and data quality:** a good internal data hygiene requires the use of standards to allow for easier and automated sharing, linking and exchanging of data.
2. **Set roles and responsibility:** clearly defining who does what within and outside of the public organization is key in ensuring efficient use of resources. This is perhaps the most important challenge facing local governments today.
3. **Strive towards an agile and flexible organization:** working with data and technology requires flexible processes to allow for corrections when needed.
4. **Develop structured evaluation:** foresee quantitative and/or qualitative KPIs to evaluate both process and outcome. This means including a baseline measurement as well.



# OPEN DATA CHECKLIST

## PARTNERSHIPS

1. **Approach data owners:** explore new partnerships with owners or relevant data to support policy challenges.
2. **Involve domain experts:** include the domain expertise present in the public organization to ensure data is described and applied in correct ways.
3. **Involve organizations with similar goals:** use the knowledge and expertise of like-minded organization, whether they be other local governments, departments within other levels of government, civil society, companies, research centers and so on.
4. **Procurement:** when procuring new solutions or renegotiating contracts with third-party vendors, include clauses related to data ownership, processing, storage and open data.



# OPEN DATA CHECKLIST

## RISKS

1. **Privacy:** develop privacy-by-design solutions and applications and include privacy impact assessments when publishing data. Open data per definition does not include personal data, however scenarios could be envisaged where the combination of open data results in the identification of individuals. An a priori privacy impact assessment can identify this.
2. **Security and data management:** as local governments start processing more data, security becomes increasingly important as well. A data management plan can support this, but may require external capacity and support.
3. **Digital exclusion:** open data initiatives should never lead to an exclusion of those who do not have the skills or access to public services.
4. **Data quality and policy decisions:** evidence-based policy can only be as good as the data that support it. Data quality and verification are thus of high importance, also when opening up. A guiding principle here can be that if data are considered of sufficient quality to be used internally for policy development, they should be of sufficient quality to open up.
5. **“Open washing”:** this risk refers to a situation in which public organizations claim to open up, but only do so to comply with regulations. This is not a sustainable situation and waste of resources. Starting from a concrete case or project can avoid this.





## CONTACT

<https://smart.flanders.be>  
[nils.walravens@imec.be](mailto:nils.walravens@imec.be)