



# SPARCS

## D6.12 Report of Cooperation with Networks of Cities or Sectors – updated version

30/09/2024

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 864242  
Topic: LC-SC3-SCC-1-2018-2019-2020: Smart Cities and Communities  
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## Dissemination level

PU	Public	X
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

## Deliverable administration

No & name	<b>D6.12 Report of cooperation with network of cities or sectors – updated version</b>				
Status	Released	Due	M60	Date	2024-09-30
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Description of the related task and the deliverable. Extract from DoA	<p><b>T6.4 interaction with regional and local smart city initiatives</b></p> <p>The task commits to strong interaction with initiatives such as the MorgenStadt Network and Nordic Edge cities. Given the enormous dissemination and multiplication potential that the smart cities' networks have, SPARCS would like to be a more active member of the collaborative platforms and networks from the start. In terms of communication (more in WP8), the commonly coordinated activities include a presence at joint events, joint workshops, mutual exchange of visibility and shared communication tools, as well as other joint tools such as newsletters. These activities will enable the SPARCS Project as well as its member cities to exchange information and experiences with other cities and initiatives under a different umbrella (e.g. nature-based solutions, regional or local initiatives), and therefore could contribute to enhancing innovation and acceleration of replication.</p> <p><b>T6.5 Networking and participatory knowledge exchange and learning</b></p> <p>The objective is to facilitate the networking and knowledge exchange between SPARCS cities and other Lighthouse project cities (77+) and cooperate with WP7 on the exploitation of existing networks and initiatives. Target is not only to cooperate on project level, but rather to establish a direct relationship among the individual cities, both LHC and FC of the H2020 SCC1.</p> <p>This deliverable is a report on cooperation with networks of cities or sectors and provides a summary of the different activities organized in cooperation with various networks and platforms, particularly on the regional and local levels.</p>				
Participants	GOPA COM, VTT, CVUT, All SPARCS partners contributing to collaboration				
Comments					
V	Date	Authors	Description		
0.1	06/08/2024	GOPA COM	Submitted for Revision		
0.2	16/08/2024	CVUT	Review of deliverable		
0.3	20/09/2024	VTT	Revision of deliverable		
0.4	27/09/2024	WP leader	Deliverable checked by WP leader and released to the Coordinator and the Quality Manager for quality check and subsequent submission to the EC.		
1.0	30/09/2024	VTT	Coordinator submits the deliverable to the EC		

## About SPARCS

Sustainable energy Positive & zero cARbon Communities demonstrates and validates technically and socioeconomically viable and replicable, innovative solutions for rolling out smart, integrated positive energy systems for the transition to a citizen centred zero carbon & resource efficient economy. SPARCS facilitates the participation of buildings to the energy market enabling new services and a virtual power plant concept, creating VirtualPositiveEnergy communities as energy democratic playground (positive energy districts can exchange energy with energy entities located outside the district). Seven cities will demonstrate 100+ actions turning buildings, blocks, and districts into energy prosumers. Impacts span economic growth, improved quality of life, and environmental benefits towards the EC policy framework for climate and energy, the SET plan and UN Sustainable Development goals. SPARCS co-creation brings together citizens, companies, research organizations, city planning and decision making entities, transforming cities to carbon-free inclusive communities. Lighthouse cities Espoo (FI) and Leipzig (DE) implement large demonstrations. Fellow cities Reykjavik (IS), Maia (PT), Lviv (UA), Kifissia (EL) and Kladno (CZ) prepare replication with hands-on feasibility studies. SPARCS identifies bankable actions to accelerate market uptake, pioneers innovative, exploitable governance and business models boosting the transformation processes, joint procurement procedures and citizen engaging mechanisms in an overarching city planning instrument toward the bold City Vision 2050. SPARCS engages 30 partners from 8 EU Member States (FI, DE, PT, CY, EL, BE, CZ, IT) and 2 non-EU countries (UA, IS), representing key stakeholders within the value chain of urban challenges and smart, sustainable cities bringing together three distinct but also overlapping knowledge areas: (i) City Energy Systems, (ii) ICT and Interoperability, (iii) Business Innovation and Market Knowledge.

## Partners





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Fostering and maintaining robust connections with various initiatives and platforms remains crucial to SPARCS's success throughout the implementation period. This collaboration, from shared communication activities to individual exchanges with other city networks and sectors, has been pivotal in driving innovation, enhancing knowledge exchange, and accelerating the potential for replication. Coordinating everyday activities and shared communication efforts also prove essential to uncovering synergies across projects and networks and contributing to the overarching objective of promoting smart urban areas.

This report summarises the most significant cooperation with regional and national networks under T6.4 and highlights the networking and participatory knowledge-sharing activities under T6.5. SPARCS has cultivated strong ties with numerous networks and projects, ensuring visibility through coordinated activities related to events and communication, solution development, implementation, and replication. This extensive involvement underscores SPARCS's commitment to advancing smart urban solutions

This deliverable is an updated version of the D6.11 Report of cooperation with a network of cities or sectors submitted in September 2022.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose and target group

This deliverable is generated by T6.4 and T6.5. Task T6.4 focuses on actively engaging with smart city networks, participating in joint events and workshops, and utilising shared communication tools to enhance innovation and replication. Task T6.5 aims to facilitate networking and knowledge exchange between SPARCS cities and other Lighthouse project cities, establishing direct relationships among individual cities within the H2020 SCC1 and networks of cities and sectors.

SPARCS has been an active member of the collaborative smart city platforms and networks, leveraging their significant dissemination and multiplication potential. In addition, communication activities, governed in WP8, worked in synergy with T6.4 and T6.5, involving commonly coordinated activities such as a presence at joint events, joint workshops, mutual exchange of visibility, and shared communication tools like newsletters and campaigns. These efforts enabled SPARCS and its members to engage with other cities and initiatives, allowing for lessons learned and best practices to be shared across various local, regional, and city-specific networks to enhance innovation and accelerate replication.

This report looks at individual actions by SPARCS consortium partners that contribute to achieving the above-mentioned goals.

### 1.2 Contributions of partners

Table 1. Contributions by partners to this deliverable.

Partner	Contributions
<b>GOPA Com.</b>	Editor of the deliverable. Content planning, summarising inputs from partners, contribution to the content
<b>CVUT</b>	Contribution to the content, quality check of the deliverable
<b>VTT</b>	Contribution to the content, quality check of the deliverable

### 1.3 Baseline

This report, released in M60, summarises the finalised work carried out in SPARCS' cooperation activities. At the launch of SPARCS, existing networks of the partners were identified, with high priority given to those most relevant to the project's overall targets. Effective coordination streamlined the navigation and organisation of information flow between partners and work packages, ensuring requests were handled flexibly and reactively. This coordination also facilitated more granular city-level work by matching technical expertise among various initiatives. This report is updated regularly based on the progress of cooperation activities as gathered during monthly calls in WP6, as well as regular updates by SPARCS partners.

## COOPERATION OF NETWORKS WITH CITIES AND SECTORS

Regional collaboration by partners is continuously developing and strengthening within SPARCS. These cooperation activities play an important role in knowledge exchange as well as in the dissemination of SPARCS activities and results.

### 1.4 Overview of regional cooperation with networks

The initiatives have been revised in July 2024

*Table 2: Regional ambassadors*

Initiative	Type	Task	Organization(s)
<a href="#">RNAE (National network for all energy agencies) (Portugal)</a>	Regional	6.4	AdEPorto
SMS - Association of Local Administrations (Czech Republic)	Regional	6.4	CVUT
<a href="#">CZGBC (Czech Green Building Council) (Czech Republic)</a>	Regional	6.4	CVUT
<a href="#">SEMMO (Municipal Energy Managers Association) (Czech Republic)</a>	Regional	6.4	CVUT
<a href="#">Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic (Czech Republic)</a>	Regional	6.4	Kladno
Energy Community Platform (Czech Republic)	Regional	6.4	Kladno
Ecosystem agreements (previously known as 6Aika)	Regional	6.4	Espoo
Finland's Lighthouses and Fellows Group	Regional	6.4	Espoo
<a href="#">Kaupunkiakatemia / Urban Academy</a>	Regional	6.4	Espoo
<a href="#">NTNU Smart Sustainable Cities competence cluster (Norway)</a>	Regional	6.4	RIL
Network of German Cities of the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities (EU Mission)	Regional	6.4	Leipzig
German Smart City Project -	Regional	6.4	Leipzig
German 100 Cities Mission -participants (9 cities from Germany)	Regional	6.4	Leipzig
<a href="#">Sustainable City (Greece)</a>	Regional	6.4	Kifissia
Association for Sustainable City Development (SBAA) (Greece)	Regional	6.4	Kifissia
<a href="#">Nordic Smart City Network (Nordic countries)</a>	Regional	6.4	Reykjavik
<a href="#">SUSTAINORDIC, Sustainable Construction Materials and Architecture</a>	Regional	6.4	Reykjavik
<a href="#">Build a Green Future (Byggjum grænni framtíð)</a>	Regional	6.4	Reykjavik
<a href="#">Green Building Council (Byggjum grænni byggð)</a>	Regional	6.4	Reykjavik
<a href="#">Climathon, Climate-KIC initiative</a>	Regional	6.4	Reykjavik
<a href="#">ANMP – Associação Nacional de Municípios Portugueses (National Association of Portuguese Municipalities) (Portugal)</a>	Regional	6.4	Maia
<a href="#">Eixo Atlantico (Portugal, Spain)</a>	Regional	6.4	Maia

<a href="#">RAP – Rede de Autarquias Participativas – Portuguese Participatory Municipalities Network (Portugal)</a>	Regional	6.4	Maia
<a href="#">Smart Waste Portugal Cluster (Portugal)</a>	Regional	6.4	SPI
<a href="#">Visegrad+ Network of Urban Labs (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia)</a>	Regional	6.4	Lviv
Mayors for Economic Growth (Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, Armenia, Belarus, and Moldova)	Regional	6.4	Lviv
<a href="#">Association of Ukrainian Cities (Ukraine)</a>	Regional	6.4	Lviv
<a href="#">UkrElectroTrans Corporation</a>	Regional	6.4	Lviv
<a href="#">CEE Bankwatch Network (Central and Eastern Europe)</a>	Regional	6.4	NECU
<a href="#">Energy Efficient Cities of Ukraine (Ukraine)</a>	Regional	6.4	Lviv

**1.5 SPARCS Cities – collaboration with regional and local smart city initiatives**

SPARCS cities and partners ensured regular, proactive collaboration maintained with various regional stakeholders. Regional exchanges of knowledge, coordination, and joint organisation of events, workshops, and campaigns were organised with the aim of supporting upscaling, replications and mutual learnings and continuous flow of information and best practices, fostering a robust network of shared expertise. This section includes highlights from October 2022 – September 2024 as the previous periods were covered in D6.11.

At the **URBIS Smart Cities Meetup** in Brno, Czech Republic, 4-6 June 2024, numerous interactions at the city level took place, strengthening the in-depth learning across the cities’ target group, with CVUT and Kladno in the hosting role of many events. VTT, Bable, Leipzig, Espoo, Maia, Reykjavik Energy, SPI, being represented. The key events were: (1) panel discussion on June 4: “Energy panel: Energy Transformations at the Neighbourhood and City Level” (Leipzig, Kladno, Maia, CVUT); (2) SPARCS Energy Solutions Day Showcase Workshop on June 5 with 8 SPARCS partners actively contributing; (3) Joint CrAFt, NEB-STAR, and SPARCS workshop on New Perspectives in Urban Planning on June 5 with Espoo and Maia participation together with Prague, Utrecht, and other cities; (4) Panel discussion on New European Bauhaus on June 5 with Espoo, Prague, and NTNU on stage; (5) exchange of cities during the Scalable Cities Task Group on Energy Communities on June 6; (6) Continuous display of the SPARCS solutions exhibition; (7) continuous screening of the educational Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on stakeholder engagement and business models of positive energy districts, which is one of the many outputs of the project; (8) the PED-EU-NET COST Action network was also mobilised and interviews by University of Bologna with Leipzig and Maia took place to create and publish SPARCS PED stories in the framework of the CA PED Database.

**1.5.1 Espoo**

Representatives participated in the **Barcelona Smart City Expo World Congress 2022** (15-17 November 2022), the **Barcelona Smart City Expo 2023** (7-9 November 2023), engaging in several key events. They attended the **Nordic Smart City Network Meeting** (6- 7 June 2023), where they shared insights and presented innovations.



A meeting of the Finnish Lighthouse Cities was held in Turku as part of the **RESPONSE** project (9-10 January 2024), emphasising collaboration. The ESP organised a co-writing process for a technical magazine involving Finnish cities from five Lighthouse projects in March 2024, highlighting joint communication efforts. The SPARCS webinar (30 January 2024) on citizen engagement presented the innovative Buddy Class concept and effectively disseminated the project's results to a broad audience, emphasising the critical role of community involvement in urban development projects. Additionally, participation in the ASCEND consortium meeting (6-8 March 2024) highlighted the importance of fostering collaboration among scalable cities, showcasing how shared knowledge and cooperative efforts can drive sustainable urban growth and innovation.

Organising the **SPARCS City Forum on e-mobility** (4 April 2024) on Teams, open to Lighthouse projects, highlights the exchange of experiences from SPARCS demos in Espoo. A joint article with Finnish Lighthouse cities in *Rakennustekniikka* emphasises the importance of dissemination and collaboration between Lighthouse projects. An energy-themed event in the Lippulaiva library and walking tours at SPARCS demo sites Sello and Lippulaiva focus on dissemination. These activities included presenting and discussing energy topics with citizens in a public library and showcasing SPARCS learnings and demos through on-site walking tours.

Espoo attended the **SPARCS & ASCEND event** (18 April 2024) during Leipzig Data Week (15-19 April 2024) provided a key opportunity for engagement. SPARCS had developed several concrete approaches utilising data for the development of Positive Energy Districts (PEDs), complemented by the expertise and innovations of ASCEND. These data-driven solutions included tools for the development, planning, implementation, and management of PEDs.

The **EU Cities Mission Label celebration** (28 May 2024) highlighted the achievements of EU Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission cities in Finland, including Espoo, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Turku, and Tampere. The presentation of Lighthouse Projects alongside fellow Finnish projects **RESPONSE** and **NEUTRALPATH** during the joint meeting of Finnish municipalities' climate work officials focused on sharing valuable learnings from Lighthouse projects and showcasing the sustainability work of the cities.

### 1.5.2 Leipzig

Between September and October 2023, the city participated in several key events that facilitated significant exchanges and presentations. The exchange with German Mission Cities provided a valuable opportunity for engagement and collaboration. The **NEUTRALPATH workshop** (4 October 2023) on citizen and stakeholder engagement offered a platform for presenting insights and fostering dialogue.

As a panellist and presenter at the **Smart City World Expo in Barcelona**, held on 7-9 November 2023, Leipzig had the opportunity to share insights and best practices on smart city development, focusing on innovative solutions and sustainable urban planning. During the same period, there was an exchange with ASCEND, the City of Munich, and DKSR centred around ASCEND and SPARCS activities. This exchange facilitated the sharing of knowledge and collaboration on projects aimed at advancing smart city technologies and strategies. These events provided valuable platforms for discussing the latest advancements and fostering partnerships in the realm of smart cities. Leipzig also participated in the ASCEND consortium meeting (6-8 March 2024).

In April 2024, Leipzig organised several key events within Leipzig Data Week (15–18 April 2024). The Smart City Lab Leipzig was inaugurated on April 15. Leipzig Data Week took place from April 15-19 and included the SPARCS & ASCEND event on April 17-18. SPARCS and the ASCEND (Accelerate poSitive Clean ENergy Districts) project joined forces to host a collaborative event titled “Data-Driven Solutions for PEDs.” This event took place at the City of Leipzig’s Smart City Lab, right in the heart of the city. During Leipzig Data Week, the event contributed to the week-long program centred around data, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and urban development challenges. Participants had the option to register for additional events throughout Data Week, broadening their exposure to cutting-edge ideas in the field.

### 1.5.3 Maia

At the **Portugal Smart Cities Summit 2023**, held from October 10 to 12, 2023, the city of Maia had the chance to engage with a diverse array of participants, including municipal authorities, national and international public and private entities, higher and secondary education institutions, academic and scientific organisations, as well as technology companies and startups. The summit covered various fields such as Intelligent Mobility, Energy, IoT, Environment, Sustainability, Water, Waste, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, and Big Data.

Maia organised and participated in a variety of other regional events where it took the opportunity to present SPARCS and its activities:

- ❖ During the **Data Makers Fest** (23-24 October 2023), participated online to discuss major trends in the future technological transition of the internet.
- ❖ Engaged in the **Circular Cities Conference InC2** (24 October 2023), emphasising sustainable urban development (SUD) strategies.
- ❖ Organised the **Maia International Green Roofs Conference '23** (26 October 2023), where Green Roof projects in Portugal and real-world practical cases in Maia were showcased.
- ❖ Took part in the **XI Porto Urban Rehabilitation Week** (6-8 November 2023), concentrating on rehabilitation, construction, and sustainability.
- ❖ Participated online in the **NGI FORUM 2023** (16 November 2023), exploring significant trends in the future technological transition of the internet.
- ❖ Attended the **OSOR Turns 15 event** (21 November 2023), discussing the implementation of open technologies in public services.
- ❖ Was present at the conference **Changes to the Code of Public Contracts and Special Public Contracting Measures** (21 November 2023), focusing on special public procurement measures.
- ❖ Engaged in the follow-up webinar to **EUI Peer Review** (3 December 2023), addressing sustainable urban development.
- ❖ Joined the **Energy Data Summit Europe** (4 December 2023), with a focus on energy.
- ❖ Participated in the **EUI Peer Review in Kalisz**, Poland (from 31 January to 1 February 2024), discussing sustainable urban development.
- ❖ Took part in the theoretical training session of the **Local 4 Action Hub: Importance of Participation** (8 February 2024), focusing on participatory processes.
- ❖ Engaged in the training sessions of the **Local 4 Action Hub: Tools** (5 and 20 February 2024), emphasising participatory processes.
- ❖ Contributed to the design of participatory processes at the **Local 4 Action Hub** (22 and 27 February 2024).
- ❖ Participated in the training session on the platform of the **Local 4 Action Hub** (29 February 2024), with a focus on participatory processes.

- ❖ Maia was also active in the following regional networks: **ANMP – Associação Nacional de Municípios Portugueses** (National Association of Portuguese Municipalities).
- ❖ Organised the **SPARCS City Forum: Seminar HORIZON EUROPE: Innovation & Development for Cities, focusing on innovative city development** (26 March 2024).
- ❖ Participated in the **E.U.I. Peer Review** (9 April 2024).
- ❖ Attended the **Leipzig Data Week** (15-19 April 2024).
- ❖ Organized a participatory session with students from high school Levante group.
- ❖ Took part in the **Local4Action Hub Valongo: Participation4All - Evaluation of the preparation of the participatory exercise** (6 and 13 May 2023).
- ❖ Hosted a **SPARCS Webinar** (14 May 2024).
- ❖ Participated online in the **R&D Session #39 by EDP NEW | Powering Progress: New trends of PV technology** (22 May 2023).
- ❖ Joined the **CDP-ICLEI Track Drop** in session online (23 May 2023).
- ❖ Engaged in the **Mission Label Event - Climate-Neutral Europe is Made Together** online (28 May 2023).

#### 1.5.4 Leipzig

The city of Reykjavik was an active participant in various prestigious regional networks that align with its commitment to sustainability and innovation. These networks include the Nordic Smart City Network, SUSTAINORDIC, Eurocities, Bloomberg Smart City, C40 Cities, Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities (EU Cities Mission), Build a Green Future (Byggjum grænni framtíð), Green Building Council (Byggjum grænni byggð), Climathon, Climate-KIC initiative, and the European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT). Reykjavik's involvement in these networks underscores its dedication to fostering sustainable urban development, enhancing climate resilience, and promoting cutting-edge technological advancements.

Reykjavik took part in and hosted numerous regional events, seizing the opportunity to showcase SPARCS and its activities:

- ❖ The **Annual Housing Open Forum** (4 November 2022), presented by the Mayor, featured a comprehensive presentation on the city's green housing projects, underscoring Reykjavik's commitment to sustainable living environments.
- ❖ The city focused on enhancing community involvement through its **Neighbourhood Planning and Civic Engagement initiative**, which aims to strengthen the collaboration between public libraries and neighbourhood planning efforts, fostering greater civic participation.
- ❖ Reykjavik participated in the **NetZeroCities Twinning Programme** general meeting (18 April 2024), where representatives from all participating cities convened to discuss local green deals and share best practices for achieving net-zero emissions.
- ❖ Another significant event was the **Iceland Innovation Week** (May 15-16, 2024), where Reykjavik engaged in planning and brainstorming sessions on co-creation and public engagement in sustainable policy making. This initiative reflects the city's dedication to integrating innovative approaches and public input into its sustainability strategies.
- ❖ Additionally, as part of the **Twinning Programme**, Reykjavik hosted a presentation from a partner city focusing on behavioural change in mobility. This event highlighted effective strategies and initiatives aimed at transforming urban mobility patterns to reduce environmental impact.

### 1.5.5 Kladno

Kladno has been active in the following regional networks: **Covenant of Mayors and CIVINET (CIVITAS)**. Both Kladno and CVUT are part of the **Energy Community Forum** organised by the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade. The platform – composed of around 40 regional and national partners – focuses on suggesting specific measures to support cities and municipalities in energy policy and project realisation. This creates a solid basis for better understanding of what the city needs and should do in the future.

Kladno has been actively participating in a range of events aimed at promoting sustainable urban development and smart city initiatives. During the **Urban Mobility Days** (4-6 October 2023) in Sevilla, the city focused on innovative solutions for urban transportation to enhance mobility and reduce environmental impact. Reykjavik took part in and hosted numerous regional events, seizing the opportunity to showcase SPARCS and its activities:

- ❖ At the **Barcelona Smart City Expo World Congress** (7 November 2023) in Barcelona, Kladno showcased its advancements in the scope of SPARCS.
- ❖ Locally, Kladno organised a workshop on the use of IoT in the PED area Sletišťě (8 February 2024), highlighting the potential of IoT technologies to improve urban living conditions and public services.
- ❖ Kladno participated in the **STARDUST** final event (28-29 February 2024) in Pamplona, discussing sustainable urban projects and sharing best practices.
- ❖ Kladno attended the **Energy Management for Cities and Municipalities conference** (24-25 January 2024), focusing on optimising energy use and promoting sustainability.
- ❖ Kladno's commitment to data-driven decision-making was demonstrated at the **Leipzig Data Week** on April 15 and 18, 2024, emphasising the importance of data solutions in urban planning.
- ❖ The city attended the **Czech-Bavarian Smart-Region** meeting on April 23 and 24, facilitating cross-border collaboration and the exchange of smart-region concepts.
- ❖ Finally, Kladno participated in **URBIS** (5 June 2024) in Brno, presenting its projects and learning from other cities' experiences in sustainable urban development. Participants were able to get a glimpse of the groundbreaking innovations tested in SPARCS lighthouse cities Leipzig and Espoo and the insightful learning journey of SPARCS fellow cities. For the first time in Brno, there will also be an exhibition of technologies tested by partners from Leipzig and Espoo. Later that day, counsellor of SPARCS fellow city Kladno and Ondřej Rys presented the city's efforts to lead climate actions during the policy congress session Creating Irresistible Climate-Neutral Cities alongside members of the Cabinet of the EU Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson, Net Zero Cities and representatives from cities in Slovenia and Finland.

### 1.5.6 Kifissia

Kifissia participated in the **Leipzig Data Week** (15-19 April 2024), an event focused on data analysis and management. The event gathered data professionals, researchers, and enthusiasts from around the world to explore the latest trends and technologies in data science. During the event, Kifissia gained valuable insights into advanced data management techniques, enhancing their understanding of how to efficiently process and analyse large datasets. They also learned about innovative tools and methodologies for improving data accuracy and security.

### 1.5.7 Lviv

Despite the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Lviv is part of the regional Connective Cities Project, which aims to establish a formal network of urban practitioners in Southeast Europe. Lviv is also involved with the Mayors for Economic Growth initiative, which includes Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, and Moldova. Additionally, Lviv collaborates with the Association of Ukrainian Cities, Connective Cities, and CRAFT Cities.

Lviv attended to the Urban Digital Twins in Munich the 13-14 September 2023. The event focused on the current state of cities worldwide, the latest research on Digital Twins, and the importance of Standardisation for their effective implementation and integration in urban environments.

## 1.6 SPARCS Cities – international events for city networks and sectors

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SPARCS cities and partners maintained consistent, proactive engagement with a variety of international stakeholders. To facilitate upscaling, replication, mutual learning, and the ongoing exchange of information and best practices, international knowledge-sharing, coordinated efforts, and collaborative organisation of events, workshops, and campaigns were undertaken. This section presents key activities from October 2022 to September 2024, as previous periods were addressed in D6.11.

**Urban Mobility Days 2023** in Seville, Spain, took place from October 4 to 6. The event provided a platform to discuss sustainable urban mobility, with a specific focus on transport skills as part of the European Year of Skills. Organised together with the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, it attracted policymakers, local authorities, and urban transport practitioners to exchange knowledge on emerging transport trends and sustainable urban mobility planning. Kladno attended the conference, gained valuable insights and inspiration, and had a great networking experience.

The **European Week of Regions and Cities** in Brussels, Belgium, from October 9 to 12, 2023, was the largest annual event dedicated to cohesion policy. It brought together politicians, decision-makers, experts, and stakeholders to discuss common challenges and solutions for Europe's regions and cities. The event aimed to facilitate cooperation, networking, and capacity-building for those implementing EU cohesion policy. The next edition - the European Week of Regions and Cities took place again in Brussels, Belgium, from June 11 to 13, 2024. The 2024 edition focused on highlighting innovative and replicable solutions being implemented across European municipalities. The objective was to inspire other cities and regions to adopt similar strategies, thereby contributing to the broader goal of achieving net-zero energy emissions by 2050. Participants were provided with insights into overcoming the various challenges associated with the transition to sustainable practices and were given the opportunity to exchange knowledge and engage in collaborative discussions. Notably, Reykjavik participated in the event, presenting solutions that not only aim to lower the city's carbon footprint but also enhance the quality of life for its residents, adding valuable perspectives and experiences to the discussions.

## 1.7 SPARCS Partners – collaboration with regional and local smart city initiatives

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### 1.7.1 VTT

VTT participated in the **CityXChange** final event held in Trondheim on October 3 - 5, 2023. During the event, important discussions were held, including the sharing of the SPARCS replication approach with the Scalable Cities network and the planning of a Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) Task Group (TG) on Energy Communities and Digitalisation. The future of Scalable Cities was also a key topic, with ATELIER project expressing interest in joining the SPARCS final event with their consortium.

In October 2023, **Talotekniikka magazine** featured an interview with Mari Hukkalainen from VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, highlighting the SPARCS project as a project coordinator, and role of collaboration in PED implementation. Additionally, VTT was involved in a collaborative webinar in Finnish with KIRAKasvufoorumi and RTL, which focused on "Growth for the building and construction sector from the Energy transition." The webinar included a presentation on the Espoo case within the SPARCS project.

VTT attended the **Barcelona Smart City Expo World Congress** (7-9 November 2023) as well as Barcelona Smart City Expo 2022 and the Making City event (16-17 November 2023) in Oulu, showcasing their work and engaging with other participants in discussions about sustainable urban development and Positive Energy Districts (PEDs).

VTT engaged in one-to-one discussions with the **University of Hiroshima** regarding future cooperation possibilities on **Positive Energy Districts (PEDs)**. They also organised the **NEUTRALPATH Capacity Building Co-design** workshop (4 November 2023) with local stakeholders in Vantaa, Finland, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.

On May 14, 2023, VTT organized a **SPARCS webinar** that included a presentation on the Finnoo plot assignment rules, providing valuable insights into the project. Later in the month, on May 21, VTT participated in an event for municipal climate leaders of Finnish municipalities, where three lighthouse projects with Finnish cities, including **SPARCS, RESPONSE-Turku, and Neutralpath**, presented their work. Additionally, VTT hosted the SPARCS climate event with Finnish Mission cities in Espoo on May 28, highlighting their ongoing efforts and collaborations in climate action.

Collaboration with **University of Hiroshima**: VTT engaged in one-to-one discussions on future collaboration possibilities regarding PEDs with the University of Hiroshima, especially related to a new IEA EBC Annex under preparation.

### 1.7.2 BABLE

BABLE team presented the work done in SPARCS, at the **+CityxChange Final Conference** (3-5 October 2023) held in Trondheim. Participation through SPARCS highlighted significant advancements and collaborative efforts in driving sustainable urban development and energy transformation in Europe.

BABLE organised **three international webinars** to explore consortia opportunities for a specific selection of upcoming EU Horizon Call for Proposals. These webinars were held as part of a project for Business Finland, the Finnish innovation agency, involving 18 innovative technology companies and 6 municipalities. The sessions, including the EU Cities Mission Workshop and "Decarbonising Cities via your Smart City Energy,"

provided a platform for stakeholders to engage, share insights, and develop collaborative strategies for urban sustainability and energy efficiency. The webinars successfully facilitated partnerships and advanced innovation in smart city and decarbonization projects.

### 1.7.3 FHG

Fraunhofer (FHG) participated in the URBIS Smart City Expo 2024, held on June 4-5, 2024, in Brno. They also took part During this engaging event cities in Smart City Expo World Congress in 2022 and 2023.

### 1.7.4 CVUT

CVUT presented **SPARCS recommendations regarding energy communities** during a visit by the Minister of Environment in October 2023. The recommendations highlighted the importance of integrated energy systems and community involvement in sustainability efforts. This visit enabled direct communication with policymakers to potentially influence future policies and initiatives related to energy communities.

CVUT held an online meeting with **ATELIER** in November 2023 to discuss collaborative efforts. The meeting focused on arranging the continuation of the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) from ATELIER to SPARCS and ASCEND. Agreement on MOOC collaboration was reached, and next steps were planned to ensure the sustainability and operational effectiveness of the MOOC initiative

In discussions with ASCEND, CVUT focused on the continuation of the MOOC from ATELIER through SPARCS to ASCEND. The meeting centred on developing an operational plan for the sustainability of the MOOC, ensuring its long-term impact and effectiveness.

CVUT co-organised and hosted the EERA JPSC semi-annual meeting in Prague on 3rd June 2024, and together with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic also 8 SPARCS-attended events and activities within the rich Urbis Smart Cities Meetup between 4th and 6th of June, utilizing also the thematic interconnections with the projects CrAFt, NEB-STAR, and the COST Action PED-EU-NET.

### 1.7.5 RIL

RIL participated in three significant events, contributing as an organiser in collaboration with various partners. On October 10, 2023, RIL organised, together with Espoo and Citycon, the webinar "Kohti kestäväää kaupunkiympäristöä - Nostoja SPARCS-hankkeesta," focused on promoting sustainable urban environments through the SPARCS project among Finnish cities and audiences. Subsequently, RIL co-organized the media event "Energiapositiiviset alueet osana ilmastoneutraalien kaupunkien kehitystä" with VTT and Siemens, which explored the role of energy-positive areas in the development of climate-neutral cities. Finally, RIL collaborated again with Espoo and Citycon for the SPARCS webinar on "Guardian Class activities in Espoo" (30 January 2024).

### 1.7.6 LSW

LSW's recent engagements demonstrate its active role in promoting energy efficiency and sustainable urban solutions. On September 13-14, 2023, LSW presented at the Ostdeutsches Energieforum, addressing regional energy challenges and opportunities to a specialist audience. On the same day, LSW organized the Energieeffizienz- und

Klimaschutz-Netzwerk, emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts in enhancing energy efficiency and climate protection. To keep its workforce informed, LSW published an article in the employee newspaper and on the social intranet. In Freiburg, the start seminar titled “Digital Energy Solutions for Sustainable Urban Communities” was both a significant event and the focus of a dedicated newsletter. Additionally, at the E-World energy fair, LSW participated in a panel discussion on the role of AI in urban transition, underlining its commitment to innovative and sustainable energy solutions.

### 1.7.7 SEECON

SEECON participated in **Leipzig Data Week** on April 15-19, 2024, demonstrating its commitment to utilizing data and technology for sustainable urban development.

## CONCLUSIONS

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SPARCS has established various important collaborations and connections, thanks to the active involvement of its cities and partners. These collaborations have been expanding at international, EU, regional, national, and local levels throughout the 5-years of project implementation, fostering innovation and facilitating key learnings.

While in the initial phases of the project, collaborations were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; towards the end of 2022, in-person meetings, events, and collaborations slowly picked up to culminate in 2023 and 2024.

After the project ends in September 2024, Consortium partners are expected to continue building on these relations and collaborations in individual capacities or as part of other projects, thus taking the key learnings and solutions from SPARCS further beyond the contractual end of the projects.