



SPARCS

D8.15 – Final Event

30/09/2024

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¹ *GOPA Com.*



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Description of the related task and the deliverable. Extract from DoA	<p>T8.4 Events and Workshops (GOPA, All partners) [M1-M60]</p> <p>Final event: a final, two-day, European replication event will take place at the end of the project period (over the last 2 months of the project) to present and widely disseminate the project results. To ensure a large visibility and audience for the event, as well as a relation with the EU level, the final event could be linked to another relevant event. The event will include the established formats of keynotes on replication, a smart city feedback sessions and citizen awareness pool together with new formats such as 1_ participative and collaborative workshops, 2_pitch competition coupled with a 3_ smart city hackaton with direct support and goal of launching at least one startup at the end of the conference to start the overall replication and creation of a market. Through the 2-day event a night of disruption will be organise, a competition style night for SPARCS cities, potential Fellow cities and other districts, SMEs and startups to exchange and network with the aim to creative disruptive space for collaboration and future replication.</p> <p>D8.15</p> <p>This is a produced final event report of the project, that will showcase all the biggest results of the project, outline the solutions, show interactions between cities, potential for replication, in addition, it will also include recommendations for the replication and upscaling further in other cities, projects.</p>		
Participants	GOPA Com, all		
Comments			
V	Date	Authors	Description
0.1	25.09.2024	GOPA Com.	Drafting
0.3	26.09.2024	VTT	Internal review by the coordinator
0.5	26.09.2024	GOPA Com.	New version of the deliverable
0.9	27.09.2024	GOPA Com.	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 to 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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1. EVENT OVERVIEW

This deliverable contains the final event report produced by the project, which showcases all the project's most significant results, outlines the solutions, and demonstrates the interactions between cities and the potential for replicating the demonstration and solutions amongst other European cities.

Further information on the event is added below.

Event Name: SPARCS Final Conference: Sparking the Transformation to Sustainable Cities

Dates: 11 - 12 September 2024

Location: Espoo, Finland

1.1 Event Description:

After half a decade of pioneering efforts to create more innovative and sustainable cities, the SPARCS journey ends. The SPARCS Final Conference is the culmination of our five-year journey, reflecting on the project's learnings, successes and outcomes over the past year and disseminating among key stakeholders from other European cities, projects and universities.

Over two days, the conference offered various presentations, meetings, and networking opportunities that provided key insights into critical work and the solutions we implemented in SPARCS.

In collaboration with Scalable Cities, we also co-organized a full day of parallel meetings and sessions to share critical lessons on favourable energy districts and urban innovation.

The conference featured a series of meetings, public presentations, and networking opportunities designed to provide key insights into the work and solutions implemented within the SPARCS initiative. Participants were able to engage with the innovative approaches taken by SPARCS lighthouse cities, Espoo and Leipzig, as they reflected on the milestones achieved in areas such as positive energy districts, mobility, energy, and ICT systems.

SPARCS Fellow Cities, including Kladno, Reykjavik, Maia, Kifissia, and Lviv, also contributed to the conference by presenting their plans for replication and upscaling. These cities shared their strategies and aspirations as they strive to transform into more sustainable urban environments.

1.2 Event Objectives

The overall goal of the final conference of SPARCS was to demonstrate and validate innovative solutions for planning, deploying, and rolling out smart and integrated energy systems that transformed cities into sustainable, citizen-centred, zero-carbon ecosystems that offered a high quality of life for all urban dwellers.

The conference showcased how SPARCS solutions integrated key factors such as technologies for energy positivity in buildings and districts, flexible grid management, energy storage, and e-mobility.

Achieving this required a long-term commitment from cities and an in-depth understanding of the challenges they faced. Stakeholder engagement was crucial for the project's success, and the final conference set up inclusive management and planning processes that involved industry, innovative SMEs, research organisations, urban planners, municipal administrations, and, critically, urban dwellers.

The aim was to create an information society that placed citizens at the centre of the decision-making process and increased general public awareness of the drive toward sustainability in the city. This enabled inclusive, integrated, and sustainable urban development, planning, and management practices.

2. EVENT DETAILS

2.1 Organisation and Responsibilities

The planning process for the event began a year in advance to ensure a seamless and successful execution. Regular monthly meetings were held to coordinate and monitor progress, while separate task group meetings were convened to discuss specific details, such as developing the event agenda and logistics.

The primary planning and organisation were led by VTT, with several team members contributing in key roles:

- Mari Hukkalainen: Coordinated the development of the event agenda, working closely with partners to shape the programme's content and flow.
- Eveliina Grönroos: Oversaw the overall project management, ensuring all event activities were aligned with objectives and timelines.
- Sami Kazi: Led the creation of the SPARCS Final booklet, including content. GOPA Com was responsible for design, printing and gathering information for dissemination, which will be carried out by VTT.
- Tytti Nikunen: Provided support throughout the event planning and overall event coordination.
- Niina Mertaniemi Managed practical arrangements for the event, including , catering, and on-site requirements.

GOPA Com. team was responsible for communication and dissemination activities. The roles included producing essential event assets, such as videos, posters, and presentations, managing speaker coordination, and overseeing the dissemination of the event booklet. Additionally, they handled social media promotion and website pre- and post-promotion. A dedicated website subpage was designed for the event as a central hub containing all information such as agenda, logistical information and registration.

City of Espoo team: Elina Wanne, Jani Tartia, Iina Turunen, Joni Mäkinen, Nelli Vasse contributed by planning and organizing the site visits together with Espoo technical partners and by providing support throughout the event planning.

RIL team: Janne Tähtikunnas, Henriikka Hellström, and Jenni

Ahola contributed by mapping out potential event venues and supporting the planning process to ensure the selection of spaces that would effectively accommodate the event's needs.

The event was held over two days at two different venues in Espoo, Finland: The first day took place at Hotel Hanaholmen, a scenic and modern conference venue known for its inspiring setting by the sea, offering state-of-the-art facilities and a comfortable atmosphere for networking and presentations.

The second day was hosted at Innopoli 2, a dynamic and innovative space designed to foster collaboration and idea exchange, providing a practical and professional environment for the event's continuation.

The careful planning and distribution of responsibilities ensured that all aspects of the event were managed effectively, contributing to its overall success and positive participant experience. Still, there were several challenges related to the slow response time by speakers and the slower than-expected delivery of the presentation for day 1.

2.2 Keynote speakers and sessions

The SPARCS Final Conference 2024 has drawn a diverse group of experts, urban leaders, and notable innovators in the sustainable energy and smart city development field. This section introduces the key speakers, presenters, and notable guests who contributed to the success of the event. Below is a detailed breakdown of all sessions, along with information about the key speakers and their sessions.

Day 1 – SPARCS Final Conference

09:00 Official Opening of SPARCS Final Conference

Speakers: Dr. Mari Hukkalainen (SPARCS Project Coordinator, Principal Scientist, VTT Technical Research Center of Finland), Elina Wanne (Development Manager, Sustainable Energy, City of Espoo), Dr. Sami Kazi (Research Team Leader, VTT Technical Research Center of Finland)

Description: The official start of the final conference of SPARCS, setting the tone for the two-day event, welcoming participants, and outlining key objectives.

09:05 Greetings from Espoo - A formal welcome to the participants, sharing the vision and progress of the City of Espoo in the context of sustainable development and positive energy communities.

Speaker: Mervi Heinaro (Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Sports, and Culture, City of Espoo)

09:15 SPARCS Legacy: A Snapshot of Project's Highlights and Achievements, created specifically for the conference is a summary of the SPARCS project's accomplishments over the past five years, highlighting major milestones, impacts, and contributions to sustainable energy communities. Link: [SPARCS Legacy](#)

09:30 Cities in the Spotlight - A discussion featuring leading project managers from SPARCS cities sharing their journeys in developing positive energy districts, energy transition, and smart city developments. The session highlights decision-making points, key milestones, and the path from challenges to successful solutions, as well as plans for future replication and scaling beyond the SPARCS project.

Panelists:

Panel 1: Nadja Riedel (City of Leipzig), Marta Moreira (City of Maia), David Škorňa (City of Kladno)

Panel 2: Elina Wanne (City of Espoo), Sylva Lam (City of Reykjavik), Artemis Giavasoglou (City of Kifissia), Yurii Polianskyi (City of Lviv)

Moderators: Michal Kuzmič (Czech Technical University in Prague), Dr. Sami Kazi (VTT)

11:30 Impactful and Climate-Neutral Innovations - A panel discussion featuring companies at the forefront of positive energy district (PED) solutions, exploring key learnings and challenges in PED implementation, as well as insights into the role of businesses in driving sustainable urban development.

Panelists: Alexander Peitz (WSL Wohnen & Service Leipzig GmbH), Gregor Kaczmarek (CENERO Energy GmbH), Lars Maura (Siemens)

Moderators: Gretel Schaj (BABLE), Nadja Riedel (City of Leipzig)

12:00 What the Real Data Shows from PED Demonstrations - A presentation and discussion on the real-world data collected from PED demonstrations. This session dives into how data, monitoring, and impact assessment are interconnected and the impact on PED project success.

Speakers: Giorgos Papadopoulos (Project Manager, SUITE 5), Aristotelis Ntalias (Project Delivery Lead, PMP, Motor Oil Hellas)

13:15 From Pilots to Large-Scale Transformations - An engaging session focusing on the replication and upscaling efforts within the SPARCS project, showcasing success stories from cities and companies, and emphasizing the role of collaboration and knowledge sharing in sustainable urban transformation.

Panelists: Markus Suomi (Citycon), Halldora Gudmundsdottir (OR Reykjavik Energy), Marta Moreira (City of Maia)

Moderator: Gretel Schaj (BABLE)

13:45 Driving Sustainable Business in PEDs - A session focusing on the profitable business aspects of PEDs and how cities can support the creation of thriving business ecosystems around PEDs, based on SPARCS' Ecosystem Business Model Assessment Framework.

14:00 Stage Takeover: Smart and Sustainable Cities and Projects Sharing Stories - Various European cities and projects share their experiences and stories related to energy transition, PEDs, and climate neutrality in a series of short project pitches, followed by a collective discussion.

Speakers:

- RESPONSE: Helmi Loukonen (City of Turku)
- NEUTRALPATH: Eira Linko (City of Vantaa)
- ARV: Kelly Riedesel (NTNU)
- POCITYF: Nuno Mateus (EDP NEW)
- ASCEND: Bernhard Klassen (City of Munich)
- ATELIER: Kirsten Dyhr-Mikkelsen (Copenhagen Municipality)

Moderators: Elina Wanne (City of Espoo), Dr. Sami Kazi (VTT)

15:05 Introducing the ATELIER-SPARCS Massive Open Online Course on Positive Energy Districts - An introduction to the collaborative ATELIER-SPARCS online course designed to educate about Positive Energy Districts

Speakers: Michal Kuzmic (CVUT), Omar Shafqat (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)

15:45 The Role of Positive Energy Districts in Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities - A session exploring the significance of PEDs in fostering climate-neutral and smart cities, along with policy recommendations and insights on the role of energy transitions.

Panelists: Dirk Ahlers (NTNU), Philippe Fournand (ASCEND), Sanna Häsä (Siemens), Mari Hukkalainen (VTT), Frans Verspeek (City of Amsterdam)

Moderator: Michal Kuzmic (CVUT)

16:45–17:15 Exclusive Peer-to-Peer Exchange for City Representatives - A dedicated session for municipal experts and city representatives to exchange insights, learnings, and experiences in sustainable urban development.

Moderators: Elina Wanne (City of Espoo), Nadja Riedel (City of Leipzig)

Day 2: SPARCS Meets Scalable Cities

09:10 Plenary Session - Scalable Cities: Results from Two Expert Groups - A plenary discussion presenting the outcomes of two expert groups on Digital Twins and Artificial Intelligence, focusing on their roles in sustainable city development.

Host: Ghazal Etminan (AIT Austrian Institute of Technology)

Digital Twins: Bruno Ávila (City of Amsterdam), Hyekyung Imottesjo (CitySync Solutions)

AI: Mengjie Han (Dalarna University, Sweden), Wolfgang Loibl (Sustainable Transformation Network)

09:45 Parallel Workshops for Scalable Cities Task Groups

1. Monitoring and Evaluation – Workshop - Focuses on drafting a call for experts on monitoring & evaluation and planning future activities for the task group.
Hosts: Dr. Aapo Huovila (VTT), Ghazal Etminan (AIT)
2. Energy Communities – Workshop - Discusses the potential and challenges of Community Energy, introducing initial findings on smartness, sustainability, and scalability, followed by a panel discussion and interactive knowledge wall session.
Hosts: Judith Borsboom (Locality), Daniele Vettorato (Eurac Research)
Speakers: David Skorna (Scalable Cities Initiative), Ghazal Etminan (AIT), Eva Winter (TNO), Bernard Klassen (City of Munich), Marta Moreira (City of Maia)
3. Joint Workshop between Task Groups for City-to-City Group, Replication, Business Models, and Financing—This collaborative workshop explored strategies to scale climate-friendly solutions across five pillars and deepen proposals for supporting sustainable transitions.
Hosts: Gretel Schaj (BABLE), Emilio Miguel Mitre (GBCE), Mikael Edelstman (Mijo Strategy AB), Graham Colcglouh (URBAN DNA Partner), Philippe Fournand (Scalable Cities), Veronika Cerna (Twenty Communications)

12:45 Parallel Sessions on Sharing of Learnings

1. Harnessing AI for Smart Urban Transformation - Introduces AI techniques in urban transformation, discussing their benefits, challenges, and future roadmaps.
Hosts: Mengjie Han (Dalarna University, Sweden), Wolfgang Loibl (Sustainable Transformation Network)
2. Climate-Neutral City Espoo - Outlines Espoo's journey towards climate-neutrality by 2030, discussing the roadmap, Climate City Contract, and sharing experiences of climate work in cities.
Hosts: Elina Wanne (City of Espoo), Niina Nousjärvi (City of Espoo)
3. NEB in Practice and Proposals - Does NEB Make a Difference, and Can it Contribute to Climate Neutrality? - Explores the application of NEB (New European Bauhaus) in project work, featuring discussions on practical integration and best practices.
Hosts: Kelly Riedesel (ARV), Dirk Ahlers (NTNU)
4. Engaging Residents - Presents citizen engagement methods used in SPARCS and RESPONSE projects, sharing experiences on reaching citizens and motivating involvement in positive energy areas.
Host: Ritva Salminiitty (Turku University of Applied Sciences)
Speakers: Nelli Vasse (City of Espoo), Merja Honkanen (KONE), Julia Schließauf (City of Leipzig), Louisa Martin (seecon Ingenieure GmbH)

14:14 The Adventure Continues - A session highlighting ongoing European Smart Cities collaboration, PED innovations, and city transformations

Speakers: Mari Hukkalainen (VTT), Philippe Fournand (Scalable Cities), Elina Wanne (City of Espoo), Nadja Riedel (City of Leipzig), Dr. Sami Kazi (VTT)

14:30 Seeing is Believing - Intro to Site Visits - An introduction

to site visits at the Sello and Lippulaiva demonstration sites, detailing practical arrangements for participants. The session was followed by guided tour of either the Sello or Lippulaiva demonstration site, offering an in-depth view of the practical applications of SPARCS innovations. Below are available photos from the site visit in Sello.

Speakers: Lars Maura (Siemens), Markus Suomi (Citycon), Iina Turunen (City of Espoo)

2.3 Demo site visits

Lippulaiva – Espoonlahti's New Urban Hub The site visit to Lippulaiva provided a unique opportunity to explore the sustainable energy solutions implemented under the SPARCS project. During the visit, participants had the chance to learn about five key solution points in detail: the solar panels that are part of Lippulaiva's energy system, located on the 15th floor of a residential building; Europe's largest geoenery facility in a commercial building, which uses carbon-free geoenery for heating and cooling; the smart electric grid solution that manages electricity consumption and storage, including a battery that participates in Fingrid's balancing power market; the utilization of the façade as part of the energy system, with solar panels blending into the architecture; and finally, the community engagement initiatives. At each solution point, an expert was present to introduce the technologies and answer questions, providing a comprehensive overview of the innovations that make Lippulaiva a cutting-edge urban hub.

Sello – Europe's most ecological shopping centre

The site visit to Sello shopping centre highlighted its commitment to energy efficiency since its construction in 2003. In collaboration with Siemens, and as a demo site in the SPARCS project, Sello developed a smart energy system featuring innovative solutions to save energy and enhance comfort. During the visit, participants learned about Siemens' introduction of the virtual power plant service at Sello, which connects it to the electricity reserve market and automatically optimizes electricity consumption to balance the grid. This demand response mechanism provides cost and environmental benefits while evening out electricity consumption peaks.



Figure 1 – Site visit - Sello

The visit showcased Sello's efforts in supporting carbon neutrality, focusing on the centre's technical systems, including flexible heating, solar panels, electricity storage, and e-mobility charging infrastructure, all of which help balance electricity production and consumption. Additionally, KONE's technical demo of a short-term power demand forecaster for elevators and the assessment of advanced people flow data were presented, illustrating the integration of elevators and escalators into Sello's smart building system.



Figure 2- Site Visit- Sello

The e-bus charging system next to Sello, implemented by Plugit, was another highlight, supporting sustainable mobility. The visit consisted of five solution points: KONE's elevators and escalators as part of smart automation solutions, Siemens' virtual power plant and smart building technology, Siemens' district heating demand-side flexibility, Siemens' solar panels as part of Sello's energy system, and Plugit's e-mobility charging infrastructure. At each point, an expert introduced the solutions and answered questions, providing a comprehensive overview of what makes Sello a leader in ecological shopping centers in Europe.



Figure 3- Site visit – Sello

2.4 Number of Attendees

The final event of the SPARCS project saw a remarkable level of participation, with a total of 176 registered attendees. Out of the 176 registered, 155 participants attended on day 1 and 140 on day 2. The conference, which marked the culmination of years of research and collaboration, attracted a diverse audience comprising academics, industry professionals, institutional representatives, and international stakeholders. The significant number of participants underscored the importance and relevance of the topics discussed, as well as the interest generated by the innovations and knowledge developed within the project. This figure highlights the effectiveness of the communication and dissemination strategies employed by the SPARCS team and lays the groundwork for future collaborations and initiatives in the field of sustainability and smart cities beyond the timeframe of project SPARCS.



Figure 4: Audience at final conference

3. HIGHLIGHTS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

3.1 Insights and milestones

The SPARCS Final Conference, held on September 11-12 in Espoo, Finland, marked the culmination of a five-year journey towards sustainable urban innovation and climate neutrality. The event was inaugurated with a welcoming address from Mervi Heinaro, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Sports, and Culture, City of Espoo. This

was followed by a session that spotlighted the SPARCS cities, where they shared their progress over the past five years in developing positive energy districts (PED), energy transition, and smart city initiatives. A significant highlight of the first day was the launch of the SPARCS' PED Business Ecosystem and Stakeholder Engagement online video course, developed in collaboration with ATELIER. This comprehensive resource aims to empower European cities by sharing extensive knowledge on PEDs, focusing on business ecosystems and stakeholder engagement.

A focal point of the conference was the role of PEDs in fostering climate-neutral and smart cities. Discussions emphasized the importance of clear expectations, ongoing collaboration, and methodologies to sustain progress beyond initial funding. Sessions like "Impactful and climate-neutral innovations" and "From pilots to large-scale transformations" underscored the need for shared goals and deep collaboration among stakeholders. Real data from PED demonstrations showcased the SPARCS data management platform's role in enhancing performance monitoring. The second day featured workshops on pivotal themes such as artificial intelligence (AI) in urban transformation, climate neutrality, the New European Bauhaus (NEB) principles, and citizen engagement. These sessions highlighted the importance of integrating citizens into urban projects and harnessing AI for smart city development, setting the stage for continued innovation and collaboration in urban sustainability.

3.2 PED Business Ecosystem MOOC

The SPARCS' PED Business Ecosystem and Stakeholder Engagement Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) was presented during the SPARCS Final Conference held in Espoo, Finland, on September 11-12. This comprehensive learning resource, developed in collaboration with the ATELIER project, is tailored to the needs of European cities and sustainability projects. The course aims to equip cities with essential knowledge on Positive Energy Districts (PEDs), business ecosystems, and stakeholder engagement strategies. By addressing the critical role cities play in mitigating climate change, the MOOC provides city planners, urban developers, and sustainability enthusiasts with an intermediate-level learning experience spread across 12 hours. Key topics include anchoring PEDs in city development strategies, engaging local stakeholders, exploring business models for PED projects, and assessing the economic feasibility of PEDs. With supporting materials like the "How to PED Cookbook" and case studies from SPARCS' work across seven European cities, this course is a valuable tool for those ready to lead transformative change in their communities.

3.3 Feedback from Attendees:

With 155 participants on day 1 and 140 on day 2, only 22 answered the satisfaction survey. Below are some of the results obtained:

1. Overall Satisfaction:

- 77.27% were very satisfied (rating 5).
- 22.73% were somewhat satisfied (rating 4).
- No one rated the event below 4.

2. Relevance of Topics:

- 95.45% found the topics relevant to their interests and needs.
- 4.55% did not find them relevant.

3. Expectations:

- 100% said the conference met their expectations.

4. Speaker Ratings:

- 54.55% rated the speakers as excellent (rating 5).
- 40.91% gave a rating of 4.

5. Networking Opportunities:

- 95.45% felt there were enough networking opportunities.
- 4.55% did not feel there were sufficient networking opportunities.

After analysing the data above, we conclude that the SPARCS Final Conference was well-received by participants. They were highly satisfied with the conference content, speaker expertise, and networking opportunities. However, a small number of attendees still felt that relevance and networking could be improved.

4. EVENT SNAPSHOTS



4.1 Summary of achievements



SPARCSeu + Segui ...
 822 follower
 6 giorni •

Deputy Mayor **Mervi Heinaro** emphasised that achieving sustainable values requires both individual and collective efforts. She noted that SPARCS was ... altro



19 2 diffusioni post

SPARCSeu + Segui ...
 822 follower
 6 giorni •

During our "The Role of Positive Energy Districts in Climate Neutral and Smart Cities" session at the SPARCS Final Conference, the critical role of Positive Energy Districts (PEDs) in fostering climate-neutral and smart cities was explored. ... altro



con **Michal Kuzmic** e 4 altri

Valentina Bonaccorso e 22 altre persone 5 diffusioni post





SPARCS Final Conference: Sparking Transformation Towards Sustainable Cities

Join us for our final event in September 2024

Event Description:

After half a decade of pioneering efforts to create smarter and more sustainable cities, the SPARCS journey comes to an end. As we reflect on our learnings, successes, and outcomes over the past five years, we invite you to our final event.

SPARCS Final Conference: Sparking the Transformation to Sustainable Cities is the culmination of our five-year journey. From 11 to 12 September 2024 in Espoo, Finland, the conference will offer various presentations, meetings, and networking opportunities that provide key insights into our work and the solutions we implemented in SPARCS.

In collaboration with Sustainable Cities, we will also co-organise a full day of parallel meetings and sessions to share critical lessons on positive energy districts and urban innovation.



7 Reasons to join us!

1. Explore the remarkable transformation stories of our seven cities on their path to becoming sustainable, positive-energy, zero-carbon communities.
2. Discover insights from the journey of our two SPARCS lighthouse cities towards creating smarter, more sustainable urban environments.
3. Gain a better understanding of how our five fellow cities plan to operate their work.
4. Visit SPARCS demo sites to see how our work in SPARCS has transformed urban spaces.
5. Connect with a diverse network of energy practitioners, researchers, and urban experts to discuss sustainable urban development.
6. Learn about the technologies and solutions implemented in SPARCS projects, gaining insights into their application and benefits.
7. Participate in a full day of Sustainable Cities events to amplify the impact of your initiatives and foster knowledge exchange.

The full agenda will be shared in the coming weeks.

Discover the agenda

View the complete event schedule and explore the agenda highlights here.

[Download the agenda](#)



Travel arrangements

Do you need more information to plan our trip to Espoo for our event? Find out everything you need to know below.

[Download travel info](#)



Demo Site Visits

Lippulaiva – Espoonlahti's New Urban Hub

Opened in spring 2022, Lippulaiva is a 150,000-square-meter mixed-use complex in Espoonlahti, featuring a shopping center, eight residential buildings, and integrated metro and bus terminals.

[Read More](#)



Sello – Europe's most ecological shopping centre

Since its construction in 2000, Sello shopping centre has prioritized energy efficiency, in collaboration with Siemens, as a demo site of SPARCS. Sello has developed a smart energy system featuring innovative solutions to save energy and enhance comfort.

[Read More](#)



5. CONCLUSION

The event was also held to celebrate the conclusion of five years of collaboration. It allowed all partners and stakeholders to reflect on the achievements, share insights gained throughout the project, and discuss future pathways for continued innovation and sustainable development. The conference served as a platform to honour the collective effort and commitment that made SPARCS successful, reinforcing the shared vision for a sustainable urban future

6. APPENDIX - AGENDA OVERVIEW

SPARCS FINAL CONFERENCE AGENDA

Event hosts for both days: *Elina Wanne, Development Manager (Sustainable energy), City of Espoo, and Dr. Sami Kazi, Research Team Leader, VTT Technical Research Center of Finland*

**SPARCS Final Conference Day I:
Wednesday 11th September 2024: *SPARCS in the spotlight*
Venue: [Hanaholmen](#), Hanasaarenranta 5, 02100 Espoo, auditorium Celsius**

Time	Title of the slot	Presenters	Intro
08:30	<i>Registration</i>		
09:00	Official opening of SPARCS Final Conference	Dr. Mari Hukkalainen , SPARCS Project Coordinator, Principal Scientist, VTT Technical Research Center of Finland with the event hosts Elina Wanne , Development Manager (Sustainable energy), City of Espoo, and Dr. Sami Kazi , Research Team Leader, VTT Technical Research Center of Finland	
09:05	Greetings from Espoo	Mervi Heinaro , Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Sports and Culture, City of Espoo	
09:15	SPARCS Legacy: A Snapshot of Project's Highlights and Achievements	Mari Hukkalainen , VTT	Short project summary and highlights of achievements.
09:30	Cities in the Spotlight	Panelists are the leading project managers of SPARCS Cities. Panel 1:	SPARCS Cities share their journeys from the past 5 years for positive energy districts, energy transition and smart city development. What were the key decision points and milestones in their learning paths? Listen to their stories

		<p>Nadja Riedel, City of Leipzig Marta Moreira, City of Maia David Škorňa, City of Kladno</p> <p>Panel 2: Elina Wanne, City of Espoo Sylva Lamm, City of Reykjavik Artemis Giavasoglou, City of Kifissia Yurii Polianskyi, City of Lviv</p> <p>Moderators: Michal Kuzmič, Head of Multidisciplinary Collaboration, Czech Technical University in Prague (CVUT) and Sami Kazi, VTT</p>	<p>about their journey from obstacles to successful solutions and their plan for replication and upscaling beyond SPARCS.</p>
11:00	<i>Coffee break and posters showcasing solutions at the auditorium lobby</i>		
11:30	<p>Impactful and climate-neutral innovations 1.</p>	<p>Panelists: Alexander Peitz, Teamlead energysolutions & multimedia, WSL Wohnen & Service Leipzig GmbH, Gregor Kaczmarek, Managing Director, CENERO Energy GmbH Lars Maura, Head of Business Development, Siemens</p> <p>Moderators: Gretel Schaj, Urban Innovation and Governance Senior Specialist, BABLE and Nadja Riedel, City of Leipzig</p>	<p>This session will feature interviews with the companies at the forefront of demonstrating Positive Energy District (PED) solutions to talk about key learnings and challenges in PED implementation on the ground.</p>
12:00	<p>What the real data shows from PED demonstrations?</p>	<p>Giorgos Papadopoulos, Project Manager, Data Intelligence Solutions, SUITE 5 and</p>	<p>We delve into real data derived from Positive Energy District (PED) demonstrations. This session will explore the relationships between data, monitoring, and impact assessment to illuminate the true impacts of SPARCS</p>

		Aristotelis Ntafalias , Project Delivery Lead, PMP, Motor Oil Hellas	demonstrations. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of how data-driven approaches can drive positive change and enhance the success of PED projects.
12:15	<i>Lunch at Restaurant Plats, Hanaholmen and posters showcasing solutions at auditorium lobby</i>		
13:15	From pilots to large-scale transformations	Panelists: Markus Suomi , Group Sustainability Manager Citycon Halldora Gudmundsdottir , Research Project Manager, OR Reykjavik Energy Marta Moreira , Project Manager, City of Maia Moderator: Gretel Schaj , BABLE	An engaging session where partners share their inspiring journeys of replication and upscaling within the SPARCS project. Hear success stories from the project's pioneering cities and companies, highlighting the power of collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange in driving sustainable urban development.
13:45	Driving sustainable business in PEDs	Tytti Nikunen , Senior Specialist, VTT Technical Research Center of Finland	What are the key factors to consider if you want to make a profitable business in PEDs or support the creation of PED business ecosystems in your city? Join this session to get familiar with SPARCS Ecosystem Business Model Assessment Framework and to hear more about service and business ecosystems around SPARCS demonstration areas.
14:00	Stage Takeover: Smart and sustainable cities and projects sharing stories	Speakers: RESPONSE: Helmi Loukonen , Specialist in circular economy and sustainable construction, City of Turku NEUTHRALPATH: Eira Linko , Project Lead, City of Vantaa ARV: Kelly Riedesel , Project Manager, NTNU POCITYF: Nuno Mateus , Project Manager, EDP NEW	Various European projects and cities take the stage to share their experience with energy transition, PEDs and climate neutrality in cities with short project pitches and a collective discussion.

		<p>ASCEND: Bernhard Klassen, Head of Project development & management "European & international Projects", City of Munich</p> <p>ATELIER: Kirsten Dyhr-Mikkelsen, Project Leader, Copenhagen Municipality</p> <p>Q&A moderated by Elina Wanne, City of Espoo and Sami Kazi, VTT</p>	
15:05	Introducing the ATELIER-SPARCS Massive Open Online Course on Positive Energy Districts	Michal Kuzmic , CVUT and Omar Shafqat , Project Manager at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS)	
15:15	<i>Coffee break and posters showcasing solutions at the auditorium lobby</i>		
15:45	The role of Positive Energy districts in climate neutral and smart cities	<p>Panelists:</p> <p>Dirk Ahlers, Project Coordinator of the new ClimaGen project and Project Manager of NEB-STAR and Re-Value, NTNU</p> <p>Philippe Fournand, ASCEND, Scalable Cities, Blue-Sight</p> <p>Sanna Häsä, Project Manager, Siemens</p> <p>Mari Hukkalainen, VTT</p> <p>Frans Verspeek, Project Coordinator of ATELIER, City of Amsterdam</p> <p>Moderator: Michal Kuzmic, CVUT</p>	How important is the role of Positive Energy Districts in fostering climate-neutral and smart cities? What are the key recommendations for changes in the policy framework for PEDS? Join the session to learn about the latest scientific advancements and the evolution and impact of energy transitions in our cities.
16:30	Closing of the 1st day and insights to the 2nd day	Mari Hukkalainen , VTT, Elina Wanne , City of Espoo and Sami Kazi , VTT	
16:40	<i>End of the presentations - free time to walk around and enjoy the environment</i>		

<p>16:45- 17:15</p>	<p>Exclusive for City representatives: Peer-to-peer exchange</p>	<p>Discussion moderators: Elina Wanne, City of Espoo and Nadja Riedel, City of Leipzig</p>	<p>We invite municipal experts and city visitors to join to this exchange and change to discuss with the SPARCS cities about sustainable urban development, learnings and experiences and exchanging of knowledge.</p>
<p>18:00</p>	<p>Networking dinner at Restaurant Plats, Hanaholmen <i>Get together, informal event with dinner from buffet table</i></p>		

SPARCS Final conference Day II:
Thursday 12th September 2024: SPARCS meets Scalable Cities
Venue: Technopolis, Innopoli 2, Tekniikantie 14, 02150 Espoo, meeting room Edison 1 & 2

Time	Title	Presenters	Intro
08:30	<i>Registration</i>		
09:00	Welcome to the 2nd day	Dr. Mari Hukkalainen , VTT Technical Research Center of Finland with the event hosts: Elina Wanne , City of Espoo, and Dr. Sami Kazi , VTT Technical Research Center of Finland	
09:10	Plenary session - Scalable cities: Results from two expert groups	Host: Ghazal Etminan , Thematic Coordinator & Senior Research Engineer, Sustainable Digital Communities Center for Digital Safety & Security, AIT Austrian Institute of Technology Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Twins: Bruno Ávila, Head of Digitalization, Process and Information, City of Amsterdam and Hyekyung Imottesjo, CEO & R&D Manager at CitySync Solutions: Digital and Green transition through co-creation • AI: Mengjie Han, Associate professor in Microdata Analysis, Dalarna University, Sweden 2. and Wolfgang Loibl, MMSc, PhD, CEO, Senior Scientist at Sustainable Transformation Network 	
9:30	<i>Break and transfer to parallel session meeting rooms</i>		

09:45	Parallel workshops for Scalable cities task groups:		
	<p style="text-align: center;">Monitoring and evaluation – workshop <i>(Meeting room Galileo, Innopoli 1)</i></p> <p>Hosts: Dr. Aapo Huovila, Senior Scientist, VTT Technical Research Center of Finland, and Ghazal Etminan, AIT</p> <p><i>The session focuses on drafting a call for experts on monitoring & evaluation and on planning the task group’s future activities.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Energy Communities – workshop <i>(Meeting room Edison 1, Innopoli 2)</i></p> <p>Hosts: Judith Borsboom, Director Locality and Daniele Vettorato, Head of Urban and Regional Energy Systems research group, Eurac Research</p> <p>Speakers: David Skorna, Chair of the Task Group for Energy Communities under Scalable Cities Initiative Ghazal Etminan, Thematic Coordinator & Senior Research Engineer, Sustainable Digital Communities Center for Digital Safety & Security, AIT Austrian Institute of Technology Eva Winter, Researcher Energy hubs, TNO Bernard Klassen, City of Munich Marta Moreira, City of Maia</p> <p><i>Community Energy, while offering significant potential for sustainable energy and community-driven initiatives, face several challenges. The session introduces to the Scalable Cities project work on Energy Communities and to the initial findings of the Expert Group on smartness, sustainability and scalability of CE. A panel discussion with invited cities will take place, leading into an interactive knowledge wall session.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Joint workshop between tasks groups for City-to-City Group, Replication, and Business Models and Financing <i>(Meeting room Edison 2, Innopoli 2)</i> <i>(ends at 12:00)</i></p> <p>Hosts: Gretel Schaj, BABLE, Governance and Urban Innovation Expert Emilio Miguel Mitre, GBCE, MAKING CITY Collaboration Leader, Urban Climate Economy, chair of Scalable Cities BM&F TG Mikael Edelstman, Mijo Strategy AB, Expert Sustainable and Smart Cities Graham Colcglouh, URBAN DNA Partner Philippe Fournand, Scalable Cities, Blue-Sight, Expert Smart sustainable cities Veronika Cerna, Twenty Communications, Expert</p> <p><i>The challenges to speed and scale the pilot solution require new approaches and a new mindset. We have built 5 pillars with proposals that can help to speed and scale solutions. We will dive into each of the 5 pillars and their action plan to pinpoint the most relevant and impactful ones in the short and mid-term. 5 groups will work on one pillar, physically for most of them, with one online group. We expect to deepen the proposals and prioritise proposals according to their capacity to support the speeding and scaling of climate-friendly solutions. A miro board helps to visualise the pillars and the proposals.</i></p>
11:45	Lunch at Restaurant Tastory, Innopoli 2		

12:40	Transfer to parallel session meeting rooms			
12:45	Parallel sessions on sharing of learnings:			
	<p>Harnessing AI for smart urban transformation <i>(Meeting room Edison 1, Innopoli 2)</i></p> <p>Hosts: Mengjie Han, Associate professor in Microdata Analysis, Dalarna University, Sweden, and Wolfgang Loibl, MMSc, PhD, CEO, Senior Scientist at Sustainable Transformation Network</p> <p><i>The workshop will introduce what artificial intelligence (AI) is and how different AI techniques have been developed in urban transformation. We will discuss benefits, challenges, gaps, and roadmaps. You are welcome to share of your experiences and learn practices from each other.</i></p>	<p>Climate-neutral city Espoo <i>(Meeting room Edison 2, Innopoli 2)</i></p> <p>Hosts: Elina Wanne, Development Manager (Sustainable Energy), and Niina Nousjärvi, Development Manager (Climate neutrality), City of Espoo</p> <p><i>Come and learn how Espoo is working towards climate-neutrality by 2030. Introductory presentation by Niina Nousjärvi will outline Espoo learnings of compiling Espoo climate-neutrality roadmap and Climate City Contract. After the introductory presentation we will discuss the ups and downs of climate work in cities. Espoo is one of European Commissions 100 climate-neutral and smart cities Misson cities, Espoo's Climate City Contract was approved in March 2024.</i></p>	<p>NEB in Practice and Proposals - Does NEB make a difference, and can it contribute to climate neutrality? <i>(Meeting room Galileo, Innopoli 1)</i></p> <p>Hosts: Kelly Riedelsen, Project Manager of ARV, and Dirk Ahlers, Project Coordinator of the new ClimaGen project and Project Manager of NEB-STAR and Re-Value, NTNU</p> <p><i>This session will explore the practical applications of NEB and its integration into proposal writing. Participants will engage in interactive discussions and gain insights from project leaders who have successfully incorporated NEB into their work, sharing valuable experiences and best practices.</i></p>	<p>Engaging residents <i>(Meeting room Hippocrates, Innopoli 1)</i></p> <p>Host: Ritva Salminiitty, Citizen Engagement Manager, RESPONSE project, Turku University of Applied Sciences Speakers: Nelli Vasse, Project Coordinator, City of Espoo Merja Honkanen, Project manager, KONE Julia Schließauf, Project manager, City of Leipzig, Louisa Martin, Project engineer, secon Ingenieure GmbH</p> <p><i>In this session, we will introduce citizen engagement methods (such as the Buddy Class programme and the Peer-mentor method) used in Espoo and Leipzig in SPARCS-project, and in Turku in RESPONSE-project. We will share experiences on how to reach citizens and explore what motivates them to get involved in the development of positive energy areas.</i></p>
13:45	Coffee break			
14:15	The adventure continues...	Mari Hukkalainen , VTT Technical Research Center of Finland, Philippe Fournand , Scalable Cities,		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Smart Cities Collaboration • Scaling up PED innovations • City transformation 	Elina Wanne , City of Espoo and Nadja Riedel , City of Leipzig interviewed by Sami Kazi , VTT Technical Research Center of Finland
14:30	Seeing is believing - intro to site visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sello • Lippulaiva • Practicalities 	Lars Maura , Head of Business Development, Siemens Markus Suomi , Group Sustainability Manager, Citycon Iina Turunen , Specialist, City of Espoo
15:00-17:30	SPARCS site visit to Sello OR Lippulaiva demonstration site Sello: Group 1: 15:21-17:00, group host: Johanna Kuusisto Group 2: 15:21-17:00, group host: Tytti Nikunen Group 3: 15:21-17:00, group host: Elina Wanne Group 4: 15.33-17:20, group host: Olivia Koskinen Group 5: 15.39-17:30, group host: Joni Mäkinen	
	Lippulaiva: Group 1: 15:19-17:10, group host: Aapo Huovila Group 2: 15:19-17:10, group host: Mia Ala-Juusela Group 3: 15:19-17:10, group host: Nelli Vasse Group 4: 15:29-17:20, group host: Kati Borgers Group 5: 15:29-17:20, group host: Jani Tartia	
	<i>Detailed group division will be informed to the site visit participants in the final conference.</i>	