Digital Transformation Strategy
for the city of Sofia
supported by
the European Commission's Digital Cities Challenge Programme

THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY FOR SOFIA: MISSION, VISON AND WHAT'S NEXT

After 18 months of work with over 100 local stakeholders the DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY FOR SOFIA (DTSS) is ready and was published on the site of the European Commission.

We are now looking to enlarge our community of supporters and ambassadors, to extend the conversation about the digital transformation of the city of Sofia and to gather different points of view.

It maps the road to digitalisation by turning Sofia into a platform for the digital products created in the city.

One of the key areas for action is strengthening the ICT and start-up ecosystem and enabling local companies to supply digital products to the city.

HERE IS A LIST OF EVERYTHING YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY FOR SOFIA

HOW IT ALL STARTED:

In January 2018 Sofia Investment Agency, on behalf of Sofia Municipality, won a place in the Digital Cities Challenge Project of the DG Grow of the European Commission, along with 40+ EU cities. The goal of the Challenge was to support the city into building a Digital Transformation Strategy via the provision of expert assistance and help from mentor cities.

THE PROCESS:

The Strategy was developed following a methodology provided by the EC and included:

- The creation of a community of over 100 local stakeholders
- Online questionnaire
- Personal interviews
- 5 local workshops
- 5 seminars with mentor and other challenge cities

THE MISSION OF THE STRATEGY:

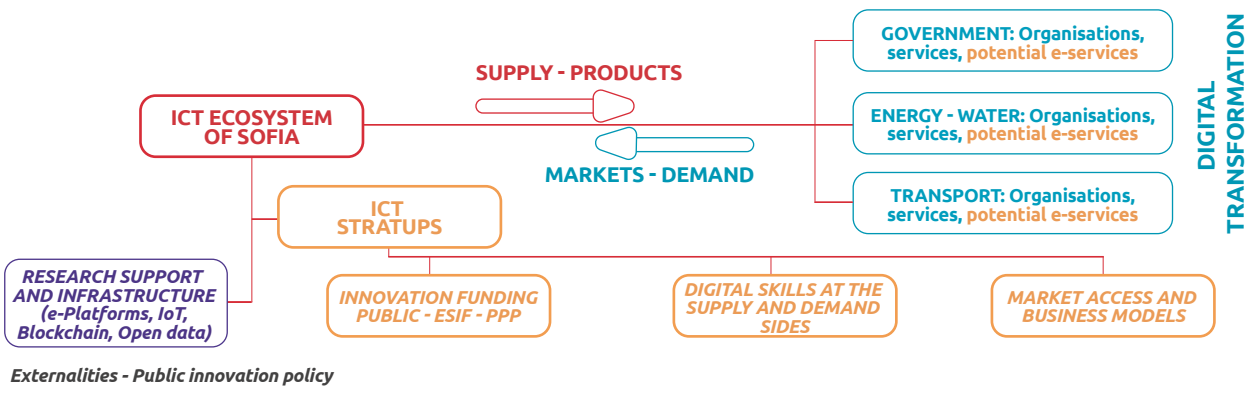
Define an action plan and actions that strengthen the business ecosystem of the ICT sector located in Sofia, in order to:

- Develop and offer solutions supporting the digital transformation of the city;
- Identify or create markets for digital services at local, national or global levels, and facilitate the access to these markets;
- Support the system of innovation enabling the development and absorption of new digital services and smart solutions.

AMBITIONS:

- Enable most companies in the ICT business ecosystem of Sofia to engage in the digital transformation of the city by developing and offering innovative products and e-services;
- Open markets or create new markets for e-services at local and national levels, by supporting and facilitating the provision of e-services to industries, the public administration, and utility organisations;
- Enhance the local innovation ecosystem by funding mechanisms, investor networks and brokerage events, facilitating the digital transformation of the local economy;
- Enhance the skills of the local ICT labour market and the start-up ecosystem for the creation of e-services and datasets by public and private organisations.

FOUR FOCUS AREAS WERE IDENTIFIED:
Three on the demand side (e-Government, Energy/Water, Transport)
One on the supply side (ICT and start-up eco-system)



IDENTIFIED GOALS AND ACTIVITIES:

18 operational goals and 10+ activities in the 4 focus areas were identified in order to create a specific action plan for digitalisation.

GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY OWNERSHIP:

In the area of e-Government the Mayor/Sofia Municipal Council should consider establishing an Office of the Chief Data Officer (OCDO), led by a newly appointed Chief Digital Officer, a director-level position that will have the executive authority to establish among others, a system for data management and the policies and practices that ensure data is collected, stored, analysed and shared consistently across the municipality and collaborating organisations.

The city should also consider establishing Sofia Digital Agency (SDA). SDA can take over the functions related to the DTSS implementation monitoring as well as facilitate the long-term digital transformation of Sofia through identifying new opportunities for digital/smart city projects and working towards their implementation.

OUTCOMES:

Assessment report for the digital maturity of Sofia (in English only)

Digital Transformation Strategy for Sofia (in English, in Bulgarian)

WHAT'S NEXT

We will start work on **detailed assessment and project development** of the 10+ identified activities with the Support of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Coordination Unit of the Fund of Funds.

Sofia will take part in **"100 Intelligent Cities Challenge"** - a new project that will take over from Digital Cities Challenge in early 2020. The project will expand the existing network of DCC cities to 100 and will include new technologies, notably AI.

An application for advisory support for the development of **Data Strategy, Data Policies and Data Management Systems** for Sofia Municipality was submitted.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Spread the word into your community!

Join the conversation, let us know of any thoughts and comments that you might have!

Join the next work group.
Let us know if you wish to receive news and invitations to the next workgroups!

NOTES

The final reports of all Digital Cities Challenge participating cities are published.

The Digital Transformation Strategies and the Assessment reports are published on the respective city pages.

The Final reports have been also published on the Publications Office of the European Union (OPOCE) webpages:

Synthesis report, Long version