

Minimal interoperability: Making Change Possible

Abstract:

Cities and communities are looking towards open, interoperable and operational digital services to solve challenges and achieve their strategic goals. The pandemic has likewise challenged cities to work harder to find ways to mitigate its impact on city centres and local businesses. In parallel, many cities are developing ambitious plans to become climate-neutral and more sustainable for the benefit of society. Digital solutions and data management can support cities and communities on their way there.

To reach a stage where cities can replicate digital solutions whenever possible and innovate only when really needed, minimal and open technical enablers are needed. This is where international standards come into play.

In support of cities and communities and their goals, OASC recommends Minimal Interoperability Mechanisms (MIMs) as a way to replicate and scale operational solutions more easily. MIMs are based on open, international standards. The MIMs approach is already being referenced in local, regional and national guidelines and strategies – from Belgium to Sweden and Denmark, all the way to Japan. Moreover, supranational institutions such as the European Commission and linked initiatives such as the Oulu Declaration (www.living-in.eu) have recognised the value of the minimal interoperability approach.

While MIMs stand at the centre of technical interoperability of data and digital solutions, cities also need a universally accessible space to explore and discover what their peers around the world have already successfully implemented. The **CITYxCITY Catalogue** recently provided by OASC, and its connected sister, the **Tech4Good marketplace** launched by the European Commission's 100 Intelligent Cities Challenges, aim to serve exactly this purpose. These platforms will amplify impact for solution providers while at the same time, de-risk investment for cities.