

## **The layman summary of the project:**

The body of literature on smart cities is vast, and it is both inter- and multidisciplinary. In this debate, the smart city is viewed as a three-pronged term, i.e. as an abstract concept, which gives rise to conceptually driven discussions, such as on governability and individual freedoms in the smart city); as an artifact, thus paving way to sophisticated ICT-oriented research; and, finally, as a policymaking objective, thus encouraging research geared predominantly to reaching policymakers. There is no shortage of topics and issues in the smart-city debate. Essentially, the smart city has been explored from perspectives pertinent to engineering, computer science, urban planning, geography and social sciences. The appearance of economics in smart-cities research is recent and very welcome, yet there is space for further contributions. This project takes up this opportunity. In the same vein, the recent attempts at quantifying and measuring the ‘smartness’ of smart cities represent an opportunity to respond to those who see smart cities as a new name for a neoliberal agenda implemented in urban space. This project seeks to add to these two interconnected threads of the discussion, as well.

This project stems from the recognition that the appearance of ICT-enhanced solutions and applications in our lives is unavoidable and that, as a result, also the city is gradually transitioning into becoming ‘smart’, i.e. taking the advantage of the existing ICT-enhanced solution to improve the quality of leaving in the city space. As cities and urban areas worldwide face a multitude of challenges, a targeted, well-thought-out use of technology for the city space, going beyond the ICT-hype, may mitigate several of these. As the economy and economic activity are the most efficient drivers of society’s development, this project bridges the gulf between earlier smart-city debate and the economy to explore the specificity of the relationship between ICT-enhanced services, applications and infrastructure, on the one hand, and business activity, innovation, competitiveness and economic growth on the other. To this end, this project offers insight into the following issues and problems:

- First, relatively little has been written about smart cities’ economic performance, especially not through the lens of competitiveness. This project addresses this issue by conceptualizing and querying the connection between ICT-enhanced applications, services and infrastructure and smart city competitiveness, eventually validating the concept.
- Second, models of smart-city assessment are still at an early stage of development. This project adds by conceptualizing and modelling smart-city competitiveness.
- Third, even less has been written about business activity in the context of smart city’s competitiveness. This project delves into this issue, asking: What is the role of the business sector in boosting and sustaining smart-city competitiveness?
- Fourth, research on the complex question of drivers of smart-city competitiveness is also nascent. This project provides detailed insights into this issue.
- Fifth, if regarded as a policymaking objective, the smart city can only consolidate its presence in the policymaking debate. In other words, more policy advice is needed on how to boost smart city competitiveness. This project offers detailed insights into this issue.