DIGITAL RIGHTS CHARTER
OF THE CITY OF BRUSSELS
Since 2019, the City of Brussels has completely changed the way it works. As part of a bold vision to bring Brussels into the 21st century, the city is harnessing technological advances to serve both citizens and the environment. This project is known as the Smart City Strategy and was formalised in March 2023.

With the city digitising much of its contact with residents, with each person having a personal online space as part of the MyBxl platform and with residents' identities being linked to their digital identities, it was important for the city to take a stance on the issue of digital rights. The aim? To ensure strict data protection for all data in the city’s possession by introducing rules that govern both administration and city’s interactions with its residents.

While the digitisation of administrative processes can undeniably help to improve citizen services and simplify administration, it will only be a success if nobody is left behind in the process.

Our transition to a digital future must therefore take account of digital rights, which we will protect by introducing our own digital rights charter.

The risk of a digital divide remains high in Belgium and is a constant source of concern, with almost one Belgian out of two considered to be at risk of being left behind.

We need to balance our ethical duty to ensure that all citizens have fair and equitable access to our services with our economical duty to embark on this tricky transition. This is why the vast subject of digital rights is a priority for the City of Brussels, and why this charter has a strong symbolic value: it underlines the crucial importance of being vigilant and taking concrete measures both in the short and in the long term.

Fabian Maingain
Alderman of Economic Affairs, Employment, Smart City and Administrative Simplification.
The City of Brussels is in the middle of a significant digital transition, and it is committed to protecting and promoting digital human rights and reducing the digital divide. Building on the Smart City Strategy of the City of Brussels, its Data Strategy and its Digital Transformation programme (BXL2021), the City aims to define a clear action plan (horizon 2030) to promote digital inclusion and outline core areas for the protection and promotion of digital human rights.

Digital human rights “are not new human rights. ‘Digital’ rights are interpreted as existing human rights which need to be protected in the context of digital technologies, as physical and digital spaces are increasingly intertwined. Digital rights assess how digital technology affects previously recognised rights – i.e., civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.”

The City aims to foster a human-centric vision of technology, in which digital tools and innovation can help to build a more supportive, dynamic and inclusive society. This aim is based on the concept of digital inclusion: “Equitable, meaningful, and safe access to use, lead, and design of digital technologies, services, and associated opportunities for everyone, everywhere”. 

This also implies that the City wants to reduce the digital divide, which can be defined as: "The gap between those who have access to and use information and communications technologies (ICTs) including Internet connectivity, Internet-enabled devices and digital literacy skills and those who do not".

**Listed below are a few relevant figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Of Brussels region households have no internet connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Of Brussels region's citizens have low, limited or no digital skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Of citizens had not researched any information on E-government sites during the twelve months preceding the survey</td>
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Everyone can experience this at some point in their life. Digital inequalities are also factors that aggravate the lack of access to rights (access to bonuses, training, subsidies, complaints, etc.).

This is why it is so important for the City of Brussels to reduce the digital divide within its territory and protect and promote digital human rights; however, for this to be achieved, people must be put at the centre of the digital transformation. This means that technologies should only be implemented when they are lawful, necessary, efficient and proportionate to their purpose, while taking into account the (in)direct social, environmental and ethical costs. However, all of this should be achieved without unreasonably slowing down the development of new technologies.

The City of Brussels is aware that, as a public actor in the field of digital rights, it can act through the services, platforms, initiatives and laws that it develops for its inhabitants and its users. Consequently, the principles listed in this document concern all residents, visitors and working people in the City of Brussels, including its own employees. In other words, they concern everyone who interacts with the City.

The City of Brussels' principles are based on the EU Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles for the Digital Decade, the principles of the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, the Declaration on joining forces to boost sustainable digital transformation in cities and communities in the EU of Living-in.eu and the pillars of the UN-Habitat's people-centred smart cities programme, as well as existing political roadmaps of the City of Brussels, such as the Citizen Participation Charter, the IT Masterplan and the 2018–2024 Majority Agreement of the City of Brussels.
IN LINE WITH THE MAJORITY AGREEMENT OF THE CITY OF BRUSSELS, THE IT MASTERPLAN AND THE SMART CITY STRATEGY, THE CITY OF BRUSSELS WILL PROMOTE ITS VISION OF A PEOPLE-CENTRIC DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PUT PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, TO CREATE:

An accessible city: where everyone living, working and visiting the city has walking access to the necessary infrastructure.

A healthy city: which actively combats climate change and supports a sustainable future.

An evolving city: which constantly adapts to the needs and expectations of current and future inhabitants, as well as to new trends and social and technological developments.

A dynamic and smart city: which encourages innovation, initiatives and training.

An open and inclusive city: which works towards authentic equality for all residents, workers and visitors.

A participatory and exemplary city: which is at the service of its residents, workers and visitors.

A city on the move: where residents, workers and visitors can easily find how to travel around the city efficiently (and which transport to use).
This document describes Brussels’ digital rights commitments and lays out the actions to which the City of Brussels is committed in order to implement them. It aims to:

- Clearly communicate the City’s vision for digital rights by 2030 and commitments towards people interacting with the City.
- Inform all citizens and digital-rights actors (e.g. digital inclusion organisations, social workers, etc.) about the existing and future (by 2030) digital rights initiatives within City territory.
- Inspire other actors within City territory also to commit to digital rights.
- The City undertakes to use all reasonable endeavours to meet the commitments listed in this document and to implement the associated actions by 2030, unless unforeseeable circumstances prevent this from taking place.

It should be noted that the actions of the City of Brussels are complementary to the Regional initiatives presented in the 2021-2024 Digital Appropriation Plan of the Brussels-Capital Region and to the federal ambitions of BOSA (FOD Beleid & Ondersteuning, FPS Strategy and Support) through the SmartNation Strategy. Some local initiatives have been/will be launched with the help of regional and/or federal authorities, in particular through the e-inclusion for Belgium calls for proposals.

The City also wishes to point out that many other actions related to digital inclusion (help, training, equipment, support, etc.) take place on its territory thanks to the initiatives and the help of countless volunteers, non-profit organisations and other organisations that have been listed by Paradigm in the Digital Inclusion Directory of the Brussels-Capital Region.

In terms of governance, the commitments and the action plan included in this charter will be reviewed during a yearly meeting by all of the stakeholders that helped elaborate this action plan and/or were involved in it along the way. The action plan will be updated gradually according to changing needs and circumstances on the territory of the City of Brussels.

While all of the Brussels digital rights principles are interconnected, they can be divided into five subsections:

- **Digital inclusion, solidarity, equality and equity**
- **Transparency, accountability and freedom of choice**
- **Participation in the digital public space**
- **Privacy, data protection, safety and security**
- **Sustainability**
1.1 MONITORING NEEDS AND GAPS REGARDING INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, DEFINING CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND RAISING AWARENESS

Digital inclusion involves avoiding active discrimination due to digital technologies and working on remedying existing inequalities that limit the opportunities of certain groups of people. To correctly address existing gaps in opportunities, it is vital to work with up-to-date information on the digital divide and identify gaps in terms of gender, age, territory, income, educational level or validity (motor, sensory, intellectual, cognitive or psychological disability).

THE CITY COMMITS TO:

Conducting a digital divide assessment within the City of Brussels territory and striving to understand its root causes, specific needs and challenges by getting in contact with the people and associations working in the field.

Learning continuously about digital rights and the digital divide, as well as related existing solutions and initiatives, e.g. by sharing information with other cities and communities, in order to help residents, workers and visitors of the City of Brussels in an enlightened way.

a) As a signatory to the “Declaration on joining forces to boost sustainable digital transformation in cities and communities in the EU” of Living-in. EU, the City of Brussels will continue to
Using the collected knowledge to define preventive and corrective actions that will help promote digital rights and digital inclusion.

3

Strengthening and communicating the commitment of the City of Brussels to a digital transformation, respecting human rights, that benefits everyone and improves the lives of all residents, workers and visitors within its territory.

4

Understanding residents’ needs regarding digitalisation

Leading initiatives to understand residents’ needs in terms of digital inclusion:

- Conducting a digital divide assessment of the territory of the City of Brussels to identify the make-up of the potentially digitally vulnerable populations of the city, in terms of gender, age, neighbourhood, income and educational level.
- Hosting meetings with the people and organisations working in the field that have a detailed knowledge of the needs of neighbourhoods and communities in the City of Brussels as regards digital rights.
- Analysing studies relating to the digital divide (King Baudouin Foundation, IBSA, etc.) to assess the evolution of the digital divide.

Defining an action plan to promote digital rights and digital inclusion

- Defining a multi-annual action plan (horizon 2030) to promote digital rights and digital inclusion that is complementary to the 2021-2024 Digital Appropriation Plan of the Brussels-Capital Region.
- Periodically revising the Brussels digital rights charter and action plan of the City of Brussels to take into account the changing context and new opportunities.

Keeping City officials updated about ongoing digital rights actions/initiatives at local, regional, federal and global levels and about existing studies relating to the digital divide that can help to identify gaps.

THESE COMMITMENTS ARE BEING/WILL BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS, INCLUDING:

Actions deployed or under deployment:
Organising digital aid events and/or relaying information about such initiatives

Organising digital aid events and/or relaying information about such initiatives during these key dates:

- Digital Week (October)
- Human Rights Day (December)
- Privacy Day (January)
- Safe Internet Day (February)
- Digital Clean-Up Day (March)
- Artificial Intelligence Week (March)
- Digital Spring (March)

Exchangeing best practices in relation to digital rights with local, European and international networks

- Holding discussions with local actors, the Brussels-Capital Region and its other municipalities, as well as with the federal level in order to ensure the harmonisation of approaches to digital inclusion in Brussels and Belgium and to collaborate on projects with common interests on this topic.
- Actively participating in activities relating to digital rights within European and international networks, such as the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights (CC4DR), Eurocities and Living-in.EU, to exchange best practices and to continue promoting and protecting these rights.

Promoting the Digital rights charter of the City of Brussels

Promoting the City of Brussels’ Digital Rights charter and its action plan among bodies working with people who could benefit from digital help within the territory of the City of Brussels, to advance this vision of digital transformation:

- Organising a promotional event with relevant associations.
- Promoting the charter on the Smart City website of the City of Brussels.
- Sharing communication material through Brussels’ websites, social media and various dissemination channels of the City of Brussels to increase the visibility of existing solutions for wider dissemination and outreach.

Defining governance for the City of Brussels Digital rights charter

Creating accountability by appointing digital rights stewards across different departments and within the Public Centres for Social Welfare, who are responsible for certain actions, and appointing a lead within the Smart City unit to coordinate implementation of the action plan.

Launching or contributing to the creation of a digital inclusion catalogue

Launching or contributing to the creation of a Digital Inclusion catalogue/inventory (FAQ/I need help) that answers the most frequent questions relating to digital rights within City territory:

- How to reach the Brussels City administration or the Public Centres for Social Welfare of the City:
- General information on hardware, Internet and digital trainings (e.g. where to find computers to use for free, Internet, available trainings and their location, etc.).
Digital aid services: administration, online banking, finance, health, sustainability

- Check your digital competences
- Resources for the (future), digital animators
- Resources and digital help for specific profiles:
  - Interesting contacts/links for people with disabilities
  - Interesting actors/links for vulnerable people (precarious, isolated, unable to move, etc.)
  - Interesting actors/links for seniors
  - Interesting actors/links for young people
  - Interesting actors/links for women
  - Interesting actors/links for job-seekers

This catalogue would mainly merge existing information provided by CABAN, the Paradigm Digital Inclusion Directory, the digital inclusion page of the Brussels-Capital Region, the webpage “Your online public service” as well as other sources.

Educating internally on digital rights

Communicating and educating about the charter and the action plan to make sure the digital rights principles are taken into account in the daily work of the city’s employees.

Communicating about digital divide

Communicating about the digital barometer and digital divide studies (e.g. the King Baudouin Foundation [KBF], the Institut Bruxellois de Statistique et d’Analyse [IBSA], etc.) in a way that is accessible to all audiences and selecting the information that is most relevant to them.

1.2 ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES ONLINE AND ONLINE SERVICES

The City of Brussels is undergoing a digital transformation that should leave nobody behind.

a) The City is working hard to offer more of its standard services online to facilitate the life of digitally literate people, since everyone should have access to all key public services online (procedures regularly carried out with the City of Brussels, such as population registration certificates, criminal record extracts, Civil Registry certificate extracts, etc.). Nobody should need to provide data more often than necessary when accessing and using digital public services, according to the “once only” principle.

b) The City of Brussels also wants to make sure that its online services can be accessed by any citizen. The accessibility, usability and affordability of digital tools and services should be guaranteed to students and pupils, seniors and persons with disabilities, as well as marginalised, vulnerable, illiterate or disenfranchised persons and any other public at risk of marginalisation in digital society.

c) The City also cares greatly about the freedom of choice offered to its citizens in terms of how to access the services provided and intends to adopt an omni-channel approach: online, by e-mail, by telephone, at the counters, etc. This topic will be further discussed in Chapter 2 of this charter.
THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

5

Procuring and developing inter-operable, accessible, non-discriminatory and inclusive digital services.

6

Improving and optimising digitised public services for all residents, including people at risk of the digital divide.

THESE COMMITMENTS ARE BEING/WILL BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS, INCLUDING:

Actions deployed or under deployment

Guaranteeing the accessibility of the citizen portal MyBXL for all citizens

Implementing the MyBXL citizen portal, a mobile-responsive site aimed at expanding the range of municipal products and services online, such as population registration certificates (family composition, residency, life), criminal record extracts, Civil Registry certificate extracts (birth, marriage, divorce), requesting authorisation to create green spaces and other services provided by the City of Brussels, such as bulky waste collection at home, etc. The City of Brussels has installed public terminals within its territory to enable citizens who do not have access to a computer to access MyBXL (citizen portal) and the Make an Appointment tool: List & map of MyBXL terminals and PCs.
Helping citizens access digital services or alternatives:

Help citizens access digital services or alternatives: Various other projects within the City help vulnerable people to overcome the digital divide:

● A mobile team from the Citizen Affairs Department takes care of citizens domiciled on the territory of the City of Brussels who are staying either in retirement homes or in hospitals, as well as those who, although still domiciled at their address, do not know or no longer know how to move around. For all these citizens, the team manages their administrative procedures with them, whether it concerns a change of address, downloading a certificate or applying for an identity card.

● Though the Smart City call for projects 2021-2022, supporting Reconnect’s project that proposes a “Digital safety deposit box” to help vulnerable people to keep administrative files in a safe online environment.

These City actions are complementary to the following initiatives:

● Social workers within the territory of Brussels City who work in Public Centres for Social Welfare, community centres and other places that are already helping vulnerable people to overcome the digital divide by helping them with digital administrative issues, etc. They receive training via EasyBrussels through the Num@tic project, in order to help citizens as best they can with their questions.

● The aid and support of the Flemish Government through the Digibanken project which provides two spaces within the territory of the City of Brussels where people can ask questions relating to IT, take training courses, use a computer and/or Wi-Fi or borrow a device.

● The Seniors Aid (for seniors and people with disabilities residing in the territory of the City of Brussels), supported and funded by the City of Brussels, as well as the Family and senior support service of the Public Centre for Social Welfare of the City of Brussels (for people with physical or mental disabilities, confronted with an illness, a period of convalescence after an operation, etc.) can support their target audiences in their administrative procedures and perform certain services online. Other forms of aid are provided, such as help with household chores, care and other types of support. Further information is available from these services:

  o The Senior Aid: 02 505 46 70 - info@aidefamiliale.be - Rue Van Helmont 32, 1000 Brussels. More information is available at: https://www.brussels.be/aid-and-services-seniors

  o Family and senior support service of the Public Centre for Social Welfare of the City of Brussels: 02 563 49 75 – infosaf@cpasbxl.brussels – Rue du Grand Hospice 7A, 1000 Brussels. More information is available at: https://cpasbxl.brussels/?p=35

● Espace Cultures et Développement asbl has created a mobile digital public space to reach the most vulnerable members of the public on the ground.

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Paradigm has created a “digital inclusion directory”, which includes (on pages 14 and 15) a list of bodies providing low-cost refurbished IT equipment.

Accompanying people with disabilities to help them access digital services or alternatives

Accompany people with disabilities to help them access digital services or alternatives, notably through actions such as:

- Raising awareness of the help available to persons with disabilities by the City’s Equal Opportunities unit: this department helps people with disabilities to access online services by telephone (0800 18 811 – freephone), by e-mail (handycontact@brucity.be) and/or provides help in person at the administrative centre (an appointment can therefore be made via this same number or e-mail).

- Ensuring the accessibility of the Administrative Centre and the decentralized offices of the City administration:
  - Translation into sign language (FR or NL) using a tablet is possible at the counters of the administrative centre.
  - The reception agents that are present in the Atrium of Brucity guide and help anyone needing assistance (including persons with disabilities) to the ticketing terminals or to the self-service terminals and direct citizens to the correct counter zone. If necessary, they also help them to move around in Brucity. Guide dogs accompanying people who are visually impaired or people who are blind are also welcome.
  - Low self-service terminals are also available so that people with reduced mobility or wheelchair users can carry out their administrative processes online.

- Organization of training in welcoming people with disabilities for all front office agents, in collaboration with the Equal Opportunities unit (handycontact service).

- Promotion of accessibility and inclusion of City services through the citizen welcome charter, co-created with all front office services.

These City actions are complementary to the following initiative:

- A national public transport discount card can be acquired by people who are blind, people with a visual impairment and people with a permanent disability of at least 90% which can facilitate their mobility financially (including access to digital training, DPS, etc.). More information and the conditions are provided by Handicap Belgium.

Providing all residents with a digital identity

Ensuring wide accessibility and interoperability of public information and services.

- In line with the EU Digital Identity Guidelines, ensure that all the residents of the City of Brussels are offered an accessible, secure, trusted digital identity that affords them access to a broad range of online services.
Promoting the use of the Open+ system in various City libraries

Promoting the use of the Open+ system in various City libraries in order to extend the opening hours of certain libraries and thus provide access to computers during extended schedules.

Developing a platform to facilitate and optimise the management of registrations in the City’s schools and nurseries

Developing a platform to facilitate and optimise the management of registrations in schools and nurseries of the City of Brussels. The data collected can help in the analysis of imbalances between supply and demand and facilitate decision making.

Developing and deploying a digital platform centralising the City’s library catalogues

Developing and deploying a digital platform centralising the City’s library catalogues, facilitating book searches, reservations and returns.

Ensuring websites for which the City of Brussels is responsible comply with accessibility regulations

Ensuring the websites and mobile applications for which the City of Brussels is responsible comply with the decree on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of regional public bodies and municipalities transposing Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.

Testing the design of new digital products and services via a citizen panel

Have the UX/UI design of major new digital products and services tested by panels of citizens, as was done for the development of the MyBXL citizen portal and tools allowing the functional organisation of spaces dedicated to users, in order to assess its use and accessibility.

Helping to organise a laptop loan system in the City

Help to organise a laptop loan system in various locations in the territory of the City of Brussels.

Making portable induction loops available at the counters of the administrative centre

Making a portable induction loop (sound amplification) available at the counters of the administrative centre for persons who are hard of hearing in order to help them access administrative services more easily.

Improving autonomous accessibility of digital tools during elections

Help certain audiences (first-time voters, seniors, people with disabilities, etc.) to overcome the digital divide in the context of elections by:

- Improving support and accessibility;
- Organising demonstrations on how to use the voting machines;
- Integrate the question of accessibility of elections into the training of polling station presidents for the 2024 elections, subject to approval by the presidents of the main office;
- Publishing on its website explanatory videos in FALC, with subtitles and in sign language.
1.3 INCLUSIVE AND MEANINGFUL CONNECTIVITY

Everyone should be able to access to meaningful connectivity in public spaces and households, in order to have the possibility of enjoying safe, satisfying, enriching, productive and affordable online interactions.

THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

Ensuring meaningful connectivity for Brussels’ visitors, residents and workers of the City of Brussels, wherever they live or are active in the City and regardless of income, age, gender, disability, education level or ethnicity.

THESE COMMITMENTS ARE BEING/WILL BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS, INCLUDING:

Extending free Wi-Fi in the buildings of the City of Brussels

Extending free Wi-Fi access points in the buildings owned and managed by the City of Brussels.

Extending free Wi-Fi within the territory of the City of Brussels

Increasing free Wi-Fi access points within the territory of the City of Brussels by collaborating on the subject with Paradigm (which is responsible for the wifi.brussels free Wi-Fi network in the Brussels-Capital Region which depends on governmental agreements and regional budgets) to add new points, where necessary. The map of existing wifi.brussels points is available here: https://wifi.brussels/en/

This is complementary to the initiative within the framework of the PAN (Digital Appropriation Plan 2021-2024 of the Brussels-Capital Region) to conduct a study on the use of wifi points, brussels (220 to date) and to move the least-used spots to other locations, such as community centres, social housing, etc.

Actions deployed or under deployment:
Ensuring a good quality Wi-Fi in DPS and community centres

Ensuring that the social structures, such as digital public spaces (DPS) and community centres located in City buildings and providing digital assistance have a decent and secure Wi-Fi connection.

These actions of the City of Brussels are complementary to the following initiative:

This aid is provided to people who are eligible for a social tariff through a reduction granted by the operators on their fixed telephony or fixed Internet bills. More information and conditions are provided by the Belgian Institute for Postal Services and Telecommunications (BIPT). For questions relating to the terms and conditions, their agents can be reached from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on tel. 02 226 89 51.

1.4 DIGITAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS FOR ALL

Everyone has the right to digital education, training and lifelong learning. They should be able to strengthen skills and acquire more autonomy to actively participate in the digital transformation of the City of Brussels by integrating the challenges posed by the widespread technological developments. This approach is also necessary for the development of a critical spirit towards technologies (access and use of digital technology without forgetting ethical, political, ecological and social issues).

THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

Providing a series of targeted training sessions to ensure that residents can acquire basic and advanced skills, and creating awareness by:

a) Promoting and supporting the efforts of educational and training institutions such as Digital Public Spaces and community centres, etc. to ensure that digital connectivity, infrastructure, tools and in-person support are accessible.

b) Providing digital training and awareness actions to help all residents of the City of Brussels to interact with digital public services.

c) Supporting efforts to allow learners and teachers to acquire and share all necessary digital skills and competencies to take an active role in the digital transformation of the City of Brussels.

This includes groups at risk of the digital divide: seniors, women and girls, job-seekers, vulnerable persons, persons with disabilities, young people, etc., who might need specific adapted training.
Supporting and promoting digital innovation centres (e.g. manufacturing labs, training and incubation centres) to improve digital innovation skills.

Strengthening and promoting Digital Public Spaces within the territory of the City of Brussels

Strengthening and promoting the Digital Public Spaces located within City territory by:

- Increasing the availability of Digital Public Spaces (starting with the DPS in the Versailles), particularly through neighbourhood contracts.
- Reinforcing their programming to offer wider access to the Internet and adequate training (e.g. on the basic use of the Internet, means of authentication such as Itsme, coding, video games, etc.).
- Increasing communication efforts to make these places known and using studies about underused Digital Public Spaces to better target these communication efforts.

Actions deployed or under deployment
These actions of the City of Brussels are complementary to:

- Aid and support for Digital Public Spaces by Paradigm, which is the body competent to continue the materialisation of municipal digital public spaces, to encourage the sharing of training manuals between Digital Public Spaces, frontline actors and associations, to promote the availability of online platforms for training and to provide “Train the trainer” training sessions for multimedia facilitators on the subject of digitised public services and offer them the necessary tools.

- The aid and support of the Flemish Government through the Digibanken project that provides two Digital Public Spaces within the territory of the City of Brussels.

- The libraries and other specific places that provide digital help/trainings.

Increasing the number of sworn digital trainers/facilitators

Increase the number of sworn digital trainers/animations, e.g. through supporting initiatives such as the Num@ttc project, by providing places and materials to support these projects

Helping job-seekers overcome the digital divide

Helping job-seekers overcome the digital divide by:

- Providing free computer lessons for job-seekers at the Centrale de l’emploi of the City of Brussels.

- Guiding job-seekers to Digital Public Spaces, libraries and other specific bodies that offer specific digital trainings for job-seekers such as at Espaces Cultures et développements, asbl, Bravvo, etc.

- Providing the list of – and information on – the most important regional bodies that can help them find a job (and also computer classes for job-seekers, validate their digital skills, etc.) and which can be found on the city’s job-seekers’ web page.

These City actions are complementary to the following initiative:

- The Digiskills Belgium.be platform of the Belgian National Coalition for Digital Skills and Jobs which helps to find digital training, convert to digital, test IT skills, etc.

Helping seniors to overcome the digital divide

Helping seniors to strengthen their digital skills and overcome the digital divide through various city actions such as:

- Providing digital aid and training in community centres: offering access to computers and the support of social workers to help them to access online services, print documents, take digital training courses, etc.

- Guiding seniors to Digital Public Spaces, Digibanken libraries and other spaces that offer computer lessons and/or digital workshops, to enable them to become more digitally autonomous, e.g. Espaces cultures et développement asbl, Bravvo, etc.

Helping women to strengthen their digital skills

The City of Brussels helps women to strengthen their digital skills by implementing the services and help offered by the Equal Opportunities unit of the City of Brussels and by supporting actions, such as:

- Basic IT training for women (15 sessions per person) via the “espace cultures et developpement asbl”.

- Supporting organisations offering support, coaching and basic or specific IT training for women, such as Girleek (one of the winners of the Smart City calls for projects of 2020–2021).

- Support, through subsidies, the non-profit organisation RWAN (Raise Women Awareness Network) which has joined the City’s “Advisory Council for Equality between Women and Men” and which aims, among other things, to provide IT training to women of Syrian origin as well as other nationalities.

- Organising training for seniors on banking applications in several community centres and libraries. In 2023, this has been organised by the Brussels-Capital Region in collaboration with Paradigm, EasyBrussels, Febelfin and the City of Brussels.
Helping young people to strengthen their digital skills

Helping young people in state schools to strengthen their digital skills through projects, such as:

- Hiring digital educators to ensure that digital technology is promoted among secondary students. The City has already hired five educators.
- Appointing IT contact persons: experienced teachers who help their colleagues to integrate digital technology into their practices.
- Creating communication channels for all state school teachers to inform, exchange tutorials or training, encourage peer learning and promote existing video tutorials.
- Promoting tools developed by the CeMPA (Centre for Methodology and Applied Pedagogy), a range of IT equipment comprising tools such as iPads, Surface Go, Interactive whiteboards and TVs, laptops and desktops, which is at the disposal of state schools to meet the needs and projects of teachers. CeMPA also provides training in the different uses of the tools made available.
- Distributing computers to students of the City of Brussels who are affected by the digital divide to facilitate their participation in remote education.
- Creating user accounts for all pupils/students and teachers to provide them with an email address and guarantee their access to tools that enable them to have digitised communication processes and help to manage communication flows between the City, members of the public training staff and users (students and parents).
- Organising programming and coding workshops (via IPGeek, CodeNPlay etc. for instance) for elementary and secondary school pupils in the City.

The City also supports organisations that help young people develop their digital skills, such as creating video games via Arts & Publics (one of the winners of the Smart City call for projects of 2021–2022) through the “En route vers les cultures!” project, etc.

These City actions are complementary to the following initiatives:

- The Public Centre for Social Welfare helps young people to learn the basics of using a computer while doing their homework through the Homework School of the Public Centre for Social Welfare.
- Some Digital Public Spaces provide training sessions or digital workshops specifically for young children, which are already being run, for example, by Espace Cultures et développements asbl, etc.
- The Brussels-Capital Region initiative provides IT equipment to mainstream secondary schools for disadvantaged pupils and to homework schools. The Brussels-Capital Region also aims to bring young people closer to the administration by promoting innovative digital solutions through the “Brussels Youth to Digital” initiative.

The digital public space, Espaces cultures et développement asbl has developed a digital inclusion project in 10 schools in the City of Brussels. It aims to promote the collective expression of young people through educational, creative and fun learning activities in order to encourage them to think critically and analyse computer tools. It also aims to introduce digitalisation, computer language, programming and robotics by giving them more opportunities outside of their school curriculum.
Providing digital training to access online administrative services

- At Brucity, reception agents direct people to electronic terminals made available in a self-service zone close to the counters in order to avoid having to go to the counters. They explain to them how to use these terminals and the MyBXL portal in order to increase their autonomy to access certain documents online and to be able to access them again from their home if they have the necessary equipment.

- In May and June, the FPS Finances offers to help citizens submit their tax declaration in Brucity (by appointment on tel. 02 279 22 11). More information from the FPS Finances on tel. 02 572 57 57.

- Information sessions concerning MyBXL are organised by the City in order to train Public Centres for Social Welfare trainers on MyBXL, who in turn train social workers.

- The deployment of self-service terminals throughout the City is accompanied by training for the teams on site.

- For new residents, the City organizes welcome evenings where a citizen affairs team is present to raise awareness and teach people how to use the MyBXL portal.

- For citizens, a video tutorial is also available:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9aQ4KLMeFQ&feature=youtu.be

Supporting the development of gaming-related skills via the opening of a new training space and incubator

Supporting the development of gaming-related skills via the opening of a new training space and incubator dedicated to gaming. This centre will be aimed at supplementing and strengthening existing training in Brussels and promoting job creation in the sector.

Supporting the development of AI-related skills via the opening of a new training space and incubator

Supporting the development of AI-related skills via the opening of a new training space and incubator dedicated to artificial intelligence in Laeken. This will be aimed at making new technologies accessible and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit among people that are low-skilled or who are excluded from the job market, in collaboration with Molengeek.

Promoting the Cityfab lab

Promoting the Cityfab lab, a digital manufacturing space with machines such as laser cutters, 3D printers, digital milling machines, etc., which makes training on these machines available to the public.
A training support for the MyBXL portal will be created for City partners

Support for the use of the MyBXL portal will be created for internal services but also for City partners (Public Centres for Social Welfare, ASBL, DPS, etc.).

Helping women to overcome the digital divide

Helping women to strengthen their digital skills through projects such as:

- The Heliport Project of the Public Centre for Social Welfare: providing digital training to groups of women, who participate in weekly collective activities that are intended to improve their daily lives.

Providing digital training for parents

- Providing digital training for parents in order to strengthen social cohesion and solidarity among parents facing the same difficulties and allow better pedagogical follow-up for pupils and parents during out-of-school periods of learning (e.g. consulting the school website, reading school notifications, being informed of the schoolwork planned, accessing the platforms used by the establishment, etc.).

- Several state schools in the City provide support/information sessions for parents to help them enrol their child in school through the online .

Support people with disabilities to overcome the digital divide

Support people with disabilities to overcome the digital divide by:

- Communicating more about the existing digital training courses in the City and the tools that exist to support them in accessing the digital world.

- Providing citizens with explanations on the use of online services by developing video tutorial capsules to be installed on electronic terminals and on the City’s website.

Helping merchants

overcome the digital divide

Helping merchants to overcome the digital divide by providing them specific digital training sessions.
1.5 FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

City employees have the right to fair, just, healthy, safe working conditions and appropriate protection in the digital environment just as they do in the physical workplace, regardless of the status, type or duration of their employment.

In line with the i-CITY strategy and the GDPR legislation (General Data Protection Regulation), every city employee is entitled to disconnect and benefit from work-life balance safeguards in a digital environment and a workplace that is free from invasion of privacy and abusive control. In addition, any additional workload due to digitisation should not be considered as additional tasks for city employees but be integrated into their daily workload. Lastly, data collected on city employees’ computers should not be used to control them, only to help to automate processes or improve their efficiency. Data use should be explained in a transparent manner.

THE CITY COMMITS TO

Providing city employees with digital education information sessions and training to keep their digital skills updated and enable them to provide guidance to citizens wanting to access online public services.
Actions deployed or under deployment:

Providing basic and advanced training on digital devices and skills for city employees

Providing city employees with basic internal training on digital devices/skills (office software, telephony software, HR software, etc.) and more specific or advanced training for employees that need it for their work and continuing to regularly provide them with new training in order to keep their skills up to date.

Providing digital inclusion training to the city employees

- Providing training to ensure that counter, multi-skilled agents and their team leaders receive specific digital inclusion training (provided by regional bodies ERAP & easy. brussels) and continue to receive updated information about this topic in order to be able to guide residents and visitors of the City of Brussels regarding training centres, human rights and transparency, inter alia, according to their needs.

The other city employees can also benefit from the free Connectoo training courses accessible to anyone working in a federal, regional or municipal administration, which provide training in digital inclusion in order to better take this issue into account in their daily work.

Actions to be achieved by 2030

Providing internal digital education sessions on specific advanced digital topics

Providing digital education sessions on specific topics such as AI, Digital Twins, Big data, etc. during the lunch breaks of employees who are interested in knowing more about these digital topics.
Everyone should be able to access and understand accurate information about the technological, algorithmic and artificial intelligence systems that impact their lives, so that they can identify and question unfair or discriminatory practices. This also includes providing alternative offline ways to access city services and public information to hold the public sector accountable for the digital solutions and technologies it applies.

2.1. FREEDOM OF CHOICE REGARDING ONLINE PUBLIC SERVICES

The City is committed to:

- Offering an omni-channel approach for the City’s public services, whereby residents, visitors and workers in the City can choose to get in touch with the City of Brussels online via the MyBXL citizen portal, by telephone, by e-mail, from a physical counter in Brucity or in one of the City’s decentralized offices.

- Communicating clearly and widely about the choices offered to citizens through the omni-channel approach, so that residents, visitors and workers in the City can effectively and freely choose which online services to use, based on objective, transparent, easily accessible and reliable information.
Ensuring an omni-channel approach

Redesigning and digitising administrative processes following a people-centric and omni-channel approach making use of the counters at the administrative centre and decentralized branches, emails, telephone, mobile solutions and online solutions.

- Ensuring off-line support for vulnerable publics and people who are not able (or not willing) to use public digital tools, to make services accessible to all residents through a hotline, FAQs, physical accessibility to help carry out administrative procedures with or without an appointment.

- Promoting secure, fast and accessible communication flows between the City, public servants and users.

Creating general guidelines on digital rights for all the City's projects

Creating a guideline/checklist to be used by the administration of the City of Brussels for all new projects, providing guidance on:

- Ensuring that digital solutions are offered in all relevant languages.
- Ensuring that information on all services provided by the City/public information is available online/offline.
- Guarantee the accessibility of City information to everyone through these commitments:
  - Use of a maximum of 2 different fonts for the same document.
  - Left alignment, balanced justification and topographic grey.
  - Make sure to have a contrast between characters and background of at least 70%.
  - Use primarily/exclusively bold, coloured boxes or borders to highlight elements of the text.
  - Showing people with disabilities in active roles, in all their diversity (including different types of disabilities), in their daily lives, in a wide range of roles - in the visuals.
  - Systematically subtitle the videos in French and Dutch.
  - Do not put writing on an image background and do not wrap text around a picture.
  - Ensuring that most of our collected data assets can be reused by other departments (taking the GDPR restrictions into account).
  - Ensuring that users' digital rights are protected
  - Checking GDPR compliance (safety, security and transparency, etc.) according to the checklist provided by the Data Protection Officer (DPO).
  - Ensuring the project is participative (taking citizens into account).
  - Ensuring that digitising has a clear purpose and brings more efficiency or added value.

Actions to be achieved by 2030

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- Ensuring the project is participative (taking citizens into account).
- Ensuring that digitising has a clear purpose and brings more efficiency or added value.
2.2. ACCOUNTABILITY REGARDING THE PROTECTION OF DIGITAL RIGHTS

THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

Ensuring a safe, fair and secure online environment in which fundamental rights are protected, on all of the digital platforms overseen by the City of Brussels, and making sure that the purposes of these platforms are correctly explained.

THESE COMMITMENTS ARE BEING/WILL BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS, INCLUDING:

Creating specific guidelines for all of the City’s IT projects

- Ensuring that websites and mobile applications for which the City of Brussels is responsible comply with the decree on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of regional public bodies, transposing Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.

- Ensuring that procurement and IT activities are sustainable

Simplifying the GDPR procedure, make it more accessible and better known to citizens

Simplify the procedure related to requests for respect of personal data rights (access, rectification, etc.) at City level, adopt a more omni-channel (and therefore more accessible) approach as well raise its profile via various awareness-raising initiatives. At present, any citizen can contact the Data Protection Officer of the City of Brussels via email dpo@brucity.be. More information: https://www.brussels.be/legal-notes
2.3. DATA ETHICS

THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

14 Strengthening mechanisms to improve data availability, quality and the transparency and security of data-sharing.

15 Supporting a data ethics culture in order to build a trustworthy relationship with the residents of the City of Brussels.

THESE COMMITMENTS ARE BEING/WILL BE IMPLEMENTED THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS, INCLUDING:

- Actions deployed or under deployment:

Sharing data through the Open Data Platform

Sharing data through the City's Open Data platform: keep adding more datasets, updating them regularly and automatically when possible.
Implementing the Data Strategy of the City

Developing projects to increase the collection, sharing and use of public sector data in line with the Brussels Data Strategy:

- Setting up a new data governance system to support the implementation of new data-related projects and improve accountability within the administration of the City.
- Increasing awareness among City staff of the need of open data and the use of it in order to facilitate decision making.
- Sharing and using data to deliver better services to residents of the City.
- Empowering actors in the data ecosystem to use data to address the City’s challenges and Smart City priorities.

Developing registers of sensors within the territory of the City

Developing registers of sensors deployed on the territory of the City to guarantee transparency of data for citizens and establish a relationship of trust with them.

2.4. ALGORITHMS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence should be used in a way that empowers and benefits all residents of the City, who must be correctly informed in an accessible and comprehensive manner: they need to be aware of the systems that impact their lives, and able to make informed choices. Moreover, their health, safety and rights need to be protected.

Actions to be achieved by 2030

16 Cooperating with the Region of Brussels and other municipalities within the Region, in order to be as consistent as possible with other local public sector AI strategies within the Brussels Region.

17 Ensuring transparency regarding the use of algorithms and artificial intelligence systems and ensuring that people are informed when interacting with them.
Ensuring that algorithms developed or procured by the City are supervised throughout their whole life cycle (from procurement to implementation and updating).

Ensuring that technologies such as algorithms and artificial intelligence are not used in high-risk applications, in accordance with the EU Regulatory framework proposal on artificial intelligence, and that they are not used to pre-determine people’s choices; for example, regarding their health, education, employment and private life. Additionally, ensuring that the use of AI will not generate automated decision-making processes prohibited by data protection regulations such as the GDPR.

Ensuring that artificial intelligence and algorithms are safe and do not violate human rights, in accordance with the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.

Ensuring that explainable AI methods (XAI) in order to enhance trust and accountability.

Ensuring that algorithmic systems are based on suitable datasets that enable human supervision, in order to avoid discrimination, profiling and other violations of data protection regulations.

Implementing standard clauses for the procurement of algorithmic systems and introducing human rights safeguards when necessary, in accordance with the City of Amsterdam’s Standard Clauses for Procurement of Trustworthy Algorithmic systems and in collaboration with other cities from the Living-in.EU network.

Actions to be achieved by 2030

Developing AI protocols

Developing AI protocols, including algorithmic registries, to ensure that AI is used safely and transparently in the City of Brussels.

Implementing AI-related procurement clauses

Implementing procurement clauses to ensure that third parties developing AI solutions for the City of Brussels ensure that these solutions do not cause harm.
PARTICIPATION IN THE DIGITAL PUBLIC SPACE

Everyone has the right to access a trustworthy online environment that is accessible, multilingual and fosters public participation. Residents, visitors and workers also have the right to freedom of expression without fear of censorship or intimidation and to be informed about who owns or controls the media services. Likewise, public online platforms must be held responsible for protecting these rights in the services that they provide.

THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

Supporting the development and best use of digital technologies to stimulate citizen engagement and democratic participation and to interact closely with the various stakeholders and, above all, with residents of the City of Brussels by:

a) Enhancing residents' participation in co-constructing the City in line with the Charter for Citizen Participation

b) Fostering dialogue with, and improving the representativeness of, a wide spectrum of residents and sharing information on projects as well as residents' initiatives of the City of Brussels, through neighbourhood and advisory councils and the collaborative digital platform at www.faireBXLsamen.be.

Developing a culture of participation, both online and offline, across the City administration.

Nurturing collaboration with federal and regional authorities to ensure that human rights are safeguarded online and that the rights of freedom of expression and access to information are respected.
Actions deployed or under deployment

**Involving residents through various participatory tools**

Involving Brussels city residents in decision-making processes through various participatory tools and collaborative methods, in order to build a more open, transparent and collaborative society. Example of tools: FaireBXLsamen platform, online surveys, etc.

**Collaborating with neighbourhood facilitators**

Collaborating with neighbourhood facilitators (civil servants), who are responsible for creating links with different neighbourhoods and establishing closer contact with local associations, in order to get a better understanding of local problems and better monitor them, but also to be able to provide residents of the City with accurate information.

**Organising neighbourhood councils**

Organising neighbourhood councils (composed of randomly selected citizen volunteers and representatives of local associations) with the goal of having a diverse panel of citizen representatives of the neighbourhood who can both be consulted on City projects and submit their own questions to the administration.

**Deploying innovative methods of animation and debate**

Deploying innovative methods of animation and debate with the civil society (citizen panels, focus groups, guidelines, etc.) for the development of major projects of the City.

**Launching an annual call for projects to be financed by participatory budgets of the City**

Launching an annual call for projects financed by the City’s participatory budgets that educates the public and raises their awareness of participation and the use of digital tools by supporting technological innovation. It aims to put residents and their needs at the centre of the process as well as to evaluate and monitor actions to make these projects impactful and sustainable.

**Using a cargo bike to consult with citizens**

Involving Brussels City residents thanks to a cargo bike called “the Babbeleir”. This original participatory tool is designed to get as close as possible to residents and attract their attention. People can gather around the bike to receive information about projects, discuss them and give their opinions.
Collaborating with other public authorities

The FaireBXL.Samen platform is provided by FPS Policy and Support, which is a federal public service assisting Belgian government services with their expertise, services and training. This platform is being developed in open source, which guarantees a certain degree of control over the source code. FPS Policy and Support also ensures the security of the platform, which reduces the risk of data being manipulated by unreliable actors, and is very attentive to the GDPR requirements, which helps the City to manage user data more effectively.

Actions to be achieved by 2030

Providing support to all City departments to include citizen participation in their projects

Providing support to all City departments in order to include citizen participation in the projects that they implement, where relevant.

Everyone is entitled to access digital technologies, products and services that are safe, secure and maintain privacy by design. Everyone has the right to privacy and control over their personal data, including the right to know how their data is being used and for what purposes. Everyone has the right to confidentiality regarding their communications and information stored on their electronic devices and no one shall be subject to unlawful online surveillance or interception measures. Everyone should be able to determine their digital legacy and to decide what happens to publicly available information concerning them after their death.
In accordance with the EU Digital Rights and Principles, children and young people should be empowered to make safe and informed choices and express their creativity online. Age-appropriate materials should improve children's experiences, well-being and participation in the digital environment. Children have the right to be protected from all crimes committed or facilitated via digital technologies.

THE CITY IS COMMITTED TO:

- Ensuring a privacy-by-design approach while developing new technologies, digitisation processes and projects to mitigate risks such as invasion of privacy, ensuring that any control device is lawful and necessary to accomplish a legitimate and human-centric purpose.

- Ensuring that personal data processing respects data protection principles. These principles are set out in Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data (GDPR) and all applicable national laws, such as the Act of 30 July 2018 on the Protection of Natural Persons with regard to the Processing of Personal Data. These regulations must be informed by official guidelines and recommendations provided by the Belgian Data Protection Authority and the European Data Protection Board.

In our compliance with those regulations, the City is committed to:

a) Processing personal data in a transparent manner and informing the concerned individual.

b) Guaranteeing that residents, visitors and workers of the City can effectively exercise their rights over data collected about them.

c) Ensuring that all of the City’s partners and processors respect at least the same level of data protection rules.

d) Registering and monitoring the security of all of the City’s personal data processes, including secure data exchange between public entities.

e) Developing, updating and implementing data protection policies and guidelines and instruments to strengthen data protection, in order to ensure that individuals’ privacy rights are respected, protected and fostered online as well as offline.

If/when NIS2 becomes applicable for cities, guaranteeing the security of the Network and Information Systems following information security standards, such as ISO 27000 and ISO 2700, continuing to develop and update policies, instruments and guidelines implementing a high level and quality of information security and ensuring that these policies are applied and effective.

Empowering City staff to improve the usability of public sector data, training them on data privacy, digital rights and on assessing risks and mitigating harmful impacts upon people and communities, as well as on ensuring privacy-protective actions in decision-making processes by means of awareness campaigns.
Consulting a Data Protection Officer (DPO) for each new data-related project or technology or process implementation that the City wishes to pursue.

Educating and empowering children and youths in public schools in the City of Brussels through training on security, data protection and autonomy in accessing and using digital tools, and on the safe and responsible use of the computers provided by these schools.

Protecting residents, businesses and public institutions from identity theft or manipulation, data breaches and cyber-attacks when interacting with the City’s public online platforms or accessing the City’s digital public services.

Affording all residents access to workshops (outside schools) informing them how to navigate the online environment safely and creating awareness of the need to protect their human rights both offline and online and to make informed choices.

Making state school children and their parents sign the Guide of Good Practices

Making every child in state secondary school in the City of Brussels and their parents sign a Guide of Good Practices that lays down some basic ground rules to ensure that the computers provided by these schools are used in a safe and responsible way.

Supporting education through the FMTTN

Supporting children and youth education in French-speaking state schools in the City of Brussels, through the mandatory Manual, technical, technological and digital training repository (FMTTN), with a view to developing critical thinking regarding information available online and promoting responsible decisions.
Including the GDPR checklist in the process of launching new projects

Including the GDPR checklist created by the Data Protection Officer (DPO) in the general checklist for new projects.

Preventing online attacks and implementing a business continuity plan in the event of a crisis

Protecting residents, businesses and public institutions against identity theft or manipulation, data breaches and cyber-attacks when they interact with the City’s public online platforms or access the City’s digital public services by implementing preventive actions and a business continuity plan in the event of such an incident.

Including a wider range of digital rights in school curriculums

Lobbying at federal level to make sure that school curriculums include a wider range of digital rights (e.g. digital inclusion, equity, transparency, etc.).

Supporting and promoting safety in the digital world

Supporting and promoting training and awareness initiatives for the benefit of all residents, visitors and workers of the City, concerning safety in the digital world, such as:

- The 60h free courses for job-seekers run by Bruxelles Formation, such as the Office automation initiation course and TOSA certification.
- The teaching material offered by safeonweb.be
- The cyber guide published by the Centre for Cyber Security Belgium, to learn how to protect personal online data, etc.
- Training on first aid for cyberbullying offered by Mediawijs for teachers and staff at pupil guidance centres:
- Online information published by The Data Protection Authority that ensures compliance with the fundamental principles of data protection.

Exploring data stewardship models

Exploring data stewardship models (such as MyData, etc.) – intended to increase people’s control over their data – and implementing the models, where appropriate.
Cities have a major responsibility in view of the current problems posed by climate change. To respond to this concern and to assume its responsibilities as a city, the City of Brussels wishes to strengthen its position as a healthy city. In particular, this means embracing digital sobriety, the circular economy and supporting local production, thus making it possible to increase energy efficiency.

In line with the EU Digital Rights Principle of Sustainability, digital products and services should be designed, produced, used, disposed of and recycled in a way that minimises their negative economic, environmental and social impact. Everyone should have access to accurate, easy-to-understand information on the environmental impact and energy consumption of digital products and services that enables them to make responsible choices.

Through its signature of the Belgian Sustainable IT Charter of the Belgian Institute for Sustainable IT (ISIT) as well as additional commitments, the City of Brussels is committed to:

- Implementing sustainable IT procurement practices.
- Making digital technologies and services measurable, transparent and readable by respecting common standards applicable to the collection, analysis and sharing of data on the impacts of digital tools and technologies, in order, inter alia, to be able to monitor performance and compliance indicators for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives and the footprint of the technologies used by the City of Brussels.
Optimising digital tools to limit their impact and consumption, taking their whole life cycle into account: promoting the circular economy, extending the life of the equipment as much as possible, limiting the consumption of resources, using renewable energy sources where possible, etc.

Promoting ethical and responsible digital practices by applying GDPR laws, committing to algorithmic ethics on the use and protection of data (particularly concerning artificial intelligence), publicising the CSR policy, etc.

Raising awareness among residents and civil servants regarding digital sustainability and responsibility and how they can help at their level.

Continuing to expand the City’s sustainability network in order to keep up with the latest innovations/solutions in this field.

Supporting actions to commit to sustainable and ethical principles

Supporting actions from the IT and other services concerned to apply the sustainable and ethical principles of the Sustainable IT Charter signed by the City of Brussels.
Supporting digital sustainable technologies

Supporting the development and use of sustainable digital technologies that have minimal environmental and social impact and which take into account the life cycle of products (production of the equipment, packaging, end of life, decommissioning, energy consumption, etc.). This implies prioritising the use of equipment from the circular economy and/or that can be put into this circuit after use, taking into account the percentage of recycled and/or recyclable materials in the manufacturing process, the Repairability Index, transport emissions, etc.).

Introducing procurement clauses that foster open-source solutions

Introducing procurement clauses that foster open-source solutions and the reuse of open code to ensure that the source code is publicly available afterwards (e.g. when outsourcing) if it is a sustainable and secure solution.

Digital sovereignty

Prioritising digital sovereignty: choosing European developers helps to strengthen competition and transparency on the tools; they are also subject to the same standards as the City of Brussels.

Choosing servers located EU

Choosing servers located in Europe.

Reducing energy consumption

Reducing the energy consumption of IT services through a series of actions, such as reducing the energy resource requirements of equipment and software and favouring digital solutions that consume little and/or reduce energy consumption.

Reducing the life cycle and end-of-life impact of IT equipment/services

Reducing the life cycle and end-of-life impact of IT equipment/services by increasing the refurbishment or reuse rate (repair – reuse rate), etc.

- The City already refurbishes its IT equipment and gives some of it to associations requesting such assistance via materiel-reconditionné@brucity.be
- The City recycles its old smartphones via an association specialising in this process as its core business.

Promoting dematerialisation/digitisation

Promoting dematerialisation/digitisation of data that is consulted frequently and shared widely in order to free the public administration from the multiple sources of analogue information (paper, microfiches, etc.) and to guarantee that the relevant public information is available in digital form. This approach will improve the efficiency of public services and ensure continual accessibility at all times for the citizen, following a cost-benefit analysis (financial, human, environmental).

Mastering computer storage and open data

Master computer storage and open data to avoid duplication of data through a series of actions such as reducing the duplication of processed information, optimising data management and updating, the regular deletion of data that should not be retained (retention periods exceeded) as well as the use of less energy-intensive storage spaces for long-term storage.

Taking human rights into account in procurement clauses

Introducing procurement clauses that take into account human rights compliance throughout the supply chain (social traceability/origin of products, worker conditions, accessibility).

Choosing servers located EU

Choosing servers located in Europe.

Publishing the CSR Report annually

Publishing the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report of the City of Brussels annually.
Participating internally in Digital Clean-up Day

Raising awareness about the sustainability actions that everyone can undertake to reduce their footprint, through participation in Digital Clean-up Day. Each year, through its internal newsletter and its intranet, the City will remind its workers of useful tips and tricks for their equipment and what they can do on a personal level.

Continuing participation and exchange through responsible digital networks

Continuing to participate in meetings and discuss through existing digital responsibility networks: ISIT, Responsible Digital Regional Initiative (Paradigm), etc.

Promoting responsible digital solutions and training

Raising awareness among residents of the City of Brussels about digital sustainability and responsibility and how they can help at their level by relaying tips and tricks from the website via the City’s communication channels.

Raising awareness among City employees and citizens about digital sustainability and responsibility and how they can help at their level by:

- Relaying Digital Clean-up Day tips from websites to citizens through City communication channels. (Actions have already been taken for City employees on this subject).
- Relaying and offering basic or advanced training (online or face-to-face) dealing with responsible digital/digital sobriety to City employees and citizens.
2021-2024 Digital Appropriation Plan of the Brussels-Capital Region: the Digital Inclusion Coordination body proposed a 2021-2024 Digital Appropriation Plan that was approved on 12 February 2021. This plan was drafted in collaboration with members of the Working Group and in consultation with actors in the field. Through it, the Region of Brussels recognises the urgency of taking concrete measures to improve the digital skills of the people of Brussels. It includes four axes: (1) Raising awareness and destigmatising, (2) Federating, (3) Equipping and (4) Supporting; 17 projects and 66 actions. The actions of the 2021-2024 Digital Appropriation Plan are intended to support and help all Brussels residents; however, the studies on which it was based identified an essential need to focus on six specific audiences, hence why a certain number of actions are aimed at job-seekers, youths, seniors, persons with disabilities, persons in vulnerable situations and women.

Digibanken: Digibanken is a project of the Flemish Government financed by the European Union through GenerationNextEU. It provides centres throughout Flanders and Brussels, to which people can go in order to get guidance on digital issues, use a computer, take digital training course, borrow a device or use Wi-Fi.

Digital divide: the gap between those who have access to and use information and communications technologies (ICTs) including Internet connectivity, Internet-enabled devices and digital literacy skills and those who do not (Reference: UN-Habitat: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/11/addressing_the_digital_divide.pdf)

Digital human rights: these are not new human rights. ‘Digital’ rights are interpreted as existing human rights which need to be protected in the context of digital technologies, as physical and digital spaces are increasingly intertwined. Digital rights assess how digital technology affects previously recognised rights – i.e., civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. (Reference: UN-Habitat: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/11/digital_rights_guide_web_version_14112022.pdf)

Digital Public Space (DPS): A Digital Public Space (DPS) is a public access space that makes digital technology available to the whole population. A DPS provides equipment (computers, ID card readers, etc.) and an Internet connection, either free of charge or for a nominal fee. In most Digital Public spaces, the visitor can enjoy:

- access, free or for a nominal cost, to computer equipment and an Internet connection;
- a basic introduction to IT: how to use the mouse and the keyboard, use of a smartphone and tablet, etc.
- basic to advanced training: basic use of digital tools in general, and sometimes learning how to use very specific software such as video editing, photo editing, website creation, etc. The basic training is common to all DPSs;
- global digital support: help with Internet searches (housing, travel, job-search sites, etc.), drafting and formatting of a CV, drafting and/or correction of letters, etc. (Reference: https://be.brussels/inclusion-numerique)

List of Digital Public Spaces in the City of Brussels: https://www.bruxelles.be/espaces-publics-numeriques-epn

List of Digital Public Spaces in the Brussels-Capital Region: https://be.brussels/brussels-for-free/it/public-digital-spaces

E-inclusion for Belgium: the e-inclusion for Belgium project began with the creation of a federal incubation fund whose resources are allocated to the financing and development of sustainable digital inclusion initiatives. These funds are made available annually to local organisations (CPAS, associations, ASBL, NGOs, EPN, associations for youths or seniors, social partners, etc.) via calls for projects. Through their local action, these organisations are close to socially vulnerable groups at risk of digital exclusion. As these groups are very diverse in composition and it is not possible to implement a one-size-fits-all solution, these organisations are best placed to provide assistance. The selected projects must include objectives that provide answers to improving digital inclusion in the medium term for the following two dimensions of digital exclusion: eliminating inequalities in digital skills and eliminating inequalities in the use of essential services. (Reference: https://www.mi-is.be/fr/projet-nextgenerationeu)

ERAP: the Brussels-Capital Region regional school for public administration

Fablab: a space open to the public that is equipped with standard and digital manufacturing tools (wood and metal cutting, 3D printer, etc.), enabling anyone, alone or in a group, to design and create objects. (Reference: https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/FabLab/188115)

FaireBXLsamen: an integrated platform for citizen collaboration and consultation within the City of Brussels, facilitating the management of different participatory processes (participatory budgets, consultations on specific developments, etc.). More information can also be found in the Charter for Citizen participation.


Mobile Digital Public Space: the Mobile Digital Public Space (EPNM) is recognised and labelled by the Digital inclusion department of the Brussels-Capital Region.
It has the particularity of being the only mobile Digital Public Space willing to reach the target audience through partnerships with non-profit organisations, CPAS, social services, schools and others. Since its creation, it has served a diverse public including people in social activation, job-seekers, people in literacy training, young people involved in extracurricular activities and seniors. The MDPS is made up of trainers and facilitators equipped with mobile equipment: laptops, modular tablets and accessories and offers services in initiation, training and improvement for the benefit of various audiences, at partners’ preferred locations. (Reference & more info: https://www.mi-is.be/fr/EPNM – Espace Cultures & Développement asbl, tel.: 02/425 65 85, mob. 0494/76 44 46).

- **Multi-skilled agents at Brucity:** workers at Brucity (the administrative centre of the City of Brussels) who work at the fast counters (operations lasting less than 5 minutes without an appointment), and process incoming e-mails.

- **Num@tic:** this project from the City of Brussels Public Centre for Social Welfare consists of creating a mobile team of digital helpers who travel to various social centres setting up digital workshops, creating digital public spaces with public computer specialists and training social workers in identifying digital needs and guiding the public. (Reference: https://www.mi-is.be/nl/projecten-brussels-hoofdstedelijk-gewest).

- **Once Only:** according to this principle, citizens no longer have to provide information to which the City already has access. Only useful information is requested, and only once, regardless of the channel chosen by the citizen. It is up to the city to keep this information in the citizen’s project folder and/or communicate internally between the different services (Reference: https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/isa2conf18/once-only-principle-project-toop_en/).

- **Responsible digital:** responsible digital is an improvement process that aims for digital technology that is more respectful of the environment, accessible, ethical and inclusive. (Reference: https://isit-be.org/)

- **Thematic agents at Brucity:** workers at Brucity (administrative centre of the City of Brussels) who receive citizens for complex operations by appointment.

- **Paradigm:** Paradigm is the regional operator for digital transition and technological innovation. It serves the public administrations of the Brussels-Capital Region and exists for the benefit of citizens. Paradigm plays a proactive role as manager and provider of the information and communications technologies (ICTs) services catalogue and promotes the pooling of resources. It also guarantees technological and legal vigilance to anticipate the developments and needs of its customers.

- **Public Centres for Social Welfare (CPAS):** Public Centres for Social Welfare or Centres Publics d’Action Sociale (public social services centres, CPAS) are tasked with guaranteeing dignified living conditions for all. To this end, they offer a wide range of assistance measures that are available to the municipality’s most disadvantaged citizens under certain circumstances (Reference: https://be.brussels/about-the-region/les-centres-publics-daction-sociale-cpas?set_language=en).

- **Reception agents at Brucity:** workers at Brucity (the administrative centre of the City of Brussels), who work at reception and whose main functions are: To inform and guide citizens; Provide digital support to ticketing terminals and self-service terminals; Answer phone calls in the call centre; Dispatch incoming mail.

- **Open Data:** open data is data that anyone can access, use and share. Governments, businesses and individuals can use open data to bring about social, economic and environmental benefits (Reference: https://data.europa.eu/elearning/en/module1/#/id/co-01).
APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES

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