



URBACT Interactive Cities

Abstract GENT

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Ghent, smart city of people

The city of Ghent truly believes the future of Europe will be made in and by cities and creative citizens. So we are pleased we can play our international role within the Interactive Cities network and fully contribute to the URBACT program.

Together with our partners, we examined how digital media can be used for local government and communication. As an **open and creative city of entrepreneurs**, Ghent's focus was to search for innovative digital strategies to support our **economic city marketing strategy** and the future of our different economic spearheads: biotechnology, ICT and digital economy, creative economy, cleantech and circular economy, health care, new materials and retail. Our goal in a nutshell: strengthen the broad network existing in Ghent and abroad and attract the right investments and **companies that ensure sustainable job creation, structural reinforcement and innovation**. This is a choice for an economy that contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations of which the City of Ghent acted as Belgian ambassador in 2017.

- 1. Together with the various stakeholders, we want to further expand this economic strategy with striking cases and promote Ghent among (potential) investors through innovative marketing tools and actions.*
- 2. Moreover, we also want to connect the different Ghent economic communities, to propagate the Ghent DNA in a common narrative, both online and in personal meetings.*

Our URBACT Local Group (ULG) - consisting of members of the so-called **quadruple helix model** - elaborated in different sessions on the matter. Within the city administration, this process was fostered by the Departments of Economy, Communication, and International Relations.

We seek an organizational shift from a rather traditional to a digital approach that offers opportunities for forming a **conversational and learning network of economic stakeholders**. Using web and social media, enabling dialogue and sharing user generated content. **A platform/HUB for interaction and promotion on a local and international scale.**

Different actions and pilots are being set up working towards this ambition:

- Develop infographics about the eco-system of each economic spearhead.
- Renew the economic city marketing material & toolbox, applying the new city brand guide to this economic field

- Setting up a picture data base, presentation material, inventory with economic city ambassadors, ...
- Starting a first platform with economical data that serve as an input for marketing tools (data scouting, structuring and visualizing knowledge)
- Strengthen the cleantech community structure as a first pilot, with common goals, congresses, wikilaunch, workshops, etc.

Not only the Municipality, but all economic stakeholders are potential city marketeers and ambassadors. Together, we have the necessary assets to set up a joint vision on the economic future of Ghent. Since we believe that a smart city needs smart citizens to be truly inclusive, innovative and sustainable.

“Ghent, smart city of people, offers all of that. So spread the word and join our ambition. Because despite all novelties, word of mouth marketing is still the best there is! “

Daniel Termont, Mayor of Ghent - President of EUROCITIES