

# Lanfranco Marasso



In 2017, research by Deloitte proposed that data opened up by Transport for London was worth approximately GBP 130 million to the London economy, having allowed partners to create over 600 mobile apps. A year later, the EU's Sharing Cities project revealed that smarter street lighting could save up to EUR 2.1 billion per year, while also using 70% less energy than existing lighting.

The promise of smart cities is built upon vast quantities of data, with Gartner predicting that there will be 25 billion things connected to the Internet by 2020, generating 600 zettabytes (10<sup>21</sup> bytes) of data per year. Value can only be derived from this data if it's coordinated, consolidated and communicated in a way that drives more effective decision-making.

That was the challenge Italian engineer Lanfranco Marasso set himself in 2016 when he created City Enabler for Digital Urban Services (CEDUS) in partnership with EIT Digital. Their platform, which is FIWARE based, aims to help municipalities organise, coordinate and manage the data that is being produced within their city.

'With City Enabler, we enable the city to provide a whole range of new services,' Marasso says. 'We harmonise and synchronise data from multiple sources and it's this combination of data that's the real value-added service.'

The technology has already been deployed in Trento, Malaga and Rennes, with ambitious plans to spread throughout Europe and further afield. The EIT has played a crucial role in helping both set up pilot projects and disseminate the results of those projects throughout Europe.



EIT digital played a strategic and important role in the growth of the platform,' Marasso says. 'Together, we established a vision to design a platform that is open and inclusive to everyone in the city.'



## Scalable development

This creation of common standards and methodologies was crucial to develop a platform that could be replicable from city to city, while also being scalable to handle the huge volume of data generated by cities.

The European Data Portal recently revealed that open data was worth EUR 75 billion to the European economy, but a number of political, legal, technical and financial barriers exist to prevent that value from being realised. The pan-European nature of the EIT has proven a tremendous help in ensuring CEDUS can navigate not only the national landscape within member states, but also the various projects underway across Europe to support open data maturity.

The unbeatable network provided by the EIT has allowed CEDUS to engage with municipalities from across Europe, not only when introducing the CEDUS concept to them, but also to help communicate the results of initial pilot projects.





'EIT Digital has believed in this project from the very beginning, which was hugely beneficial,' Marasso says. 'In the last year, we applied for a public tender as a partnership and we were able to win that tender collectively, which is tangible vindication of the strength of the partnership.'

## A growing market

Recent data suggested that the smart city platform market will be worth USD 223 billion by 2023, growing by over 16% per year. Despite this tremendous growth, success is by no means guaranteed for either entrepreneurs or municipalities. A report from the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) found that a lack of public involvement has resulted in a failure to really excite citizens about how smart cities can benefit them. It's something Marasso believes start-ups have to keep in mind from the very beginning.

**I think that the most important thing for any smart city entrepreneur is to have a clear vision in mind as to the benefit you are going to bring to people, and the problem you wish to solve,' he says. 'This clear vision is crucial as ownership is inevitably distributed and therefore the project is much more complex than those with single owners and single points of responsibility.'**

This strategy is also crucial for municipalities aiming to become smarter, as research suggests that precious few have a clear strategy. Data from McKinsey does show progress being made however, and underlines that with robust strategies, urban areas are making great strides in areas such as transportation and pollution that will help transform the expectation for smart cities to reality.

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