

«Intelligent Cities Challenge – ICC» a milestone programme for the Municipality of Central Corfu and Diapontia Islands.



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Summary

The purpose of this article is to present how the European Commission's «100 Intelligent Cities Challenge» programme managed to become the umbrella programme that enabled the Municipality of Central Corfu and Diapontia Islands to plan and implement a wide range of actions that led to a reduction of the overall environmental footprint of our Municipality, but also at the beginning of our digital transformation.

«Intelligent Cities Challenge - ICC» an initiative from the European Commission

One of the most emblematic moments of this municipal period was the moment when the Municipality of Central Corfu and Diapontia Islands (hereafter MCCDI) managed for the 1st time in its history to become part of a highly competitive European programme.

The Mayor and the municipal authority of the MCCDI had embraced from the very beginning the vision to transform the MCCDI into a sustainable island of Europe.

To conform with this vision, the Department of European Programmes, Development and Digital Governance with the assistance of the Scientific Advisor to the Mayor, Mr. Victor Dimoulis, succeeded in becoming part of the «100 Intelligent Cities Challenge - ICC» initiative, as the only me-

dium sized European island that has been chosen to participate in the programme. The 100 Intelligent Cities Challenge (ICC) was a European Commission initiative / programme which was funded by COSME, the EU programme for the **Competitiveness** of Enterprises and SMEs and supported 136 cities **in using cutting-edge technologies** to lead the intelligent, green and socially responsible recovery.

More specifically, the ICC initiative's goals were to provide:

- a) Strategic advices from international experts tailored to each city that participated,
- b) Mentoring from the most innovative mentor cities in the EU,
- c) Community conventions – for action over talk,
- d) Support by transversal services on access to data, access to finance and through a marketplace full of innovative solutions.

The ICC provided the MCCDI with assistance in order to establish effective strategies for circular economy, **renewable energy** solutions and green mobility, while simultaneously aspiring to simplify citizens' lives through e-Government and by digitizing public services to make cities fit for the European Digital Age.

To succeed on that front, the ICC programme requested the cities to deliver “quick wins” from their City Goals in the

first 6 months, followed by larger projects that successfully improved city life, which for the City of Corfu were the following:

City goal 1- “Waste management and circular economy” (Prior City goal)

City goal 2- “e-Government and digitizing public services”

City goal 3- “Scaling up renewable energy solutions and energy-efficiency”

City goal 4- “Smart and green mobility and transport”.

The Mayor and Corfu’s ICC team were committed to providing sustainable and permanent solutions to the biggest problem that the island of Corfu has ever faced, which was our 1st and outmost prior City goal - **“Waste management and circular economy”**.

On this particular City Goal, a quick review of our accomplishments is following:

1) Our first and most proud accomplishment is the development of the website: recycle.corfu.gr/

This website is the first official website in the history of Corfu dedicated to topics related to the circular economy, recycling, and promoting understanding of the recycling process and how to implement “Waste Separation at Source” according to the specific conditions of our municipality and was designed by Mr. Victor Dimoulis.

The most important is that it operates as an online guide for the citizens, trying to answer the fundamental questions citizens usually asked regarding (Where, which ones, Why, and How) to avoid, reuse or recycle properly the different waste categories and we hope to succeed and answer also the last critical question, **which is When !!!**

The website recycle.corfu.gr was recently awarded with the **«Environmental Information»** award, in the category **«ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS - ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION»** in the context of the **«GREEK GREEN AWARDS 2023»** but also has been selected from the **“Depart-**

ment of Innovation and Best Practices” of the Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs, as an innovation of the Greek Public Sector.

2) Other informing and raising awareness actions of the general population that took or will take place are: **a) the participation** of our Municipality in the FOLLOWGREEN web platform, **b) the set-up of the “School Recycling Marathon”** to raise awareness among the students of the municipality and **c) the launch of a well-structured campaign that will take place before the end of 2023.**

3) We also aim to take immediate action that will transform the current form of waste collection and improve and upgrade it into smart waste management by developing a smart sensors network to as many bins as possible to monitor their condition and collect data so we can create the best routes based on their capacity.

4) Since the beginning of the ICC initiative (September 2020), the MCCDI has implemented successfully 8 separate collection networks for the following streams in all areas of the municipality’s administrative boundaries:

- Batteries (51 spots)
- Light Bulbs - Lamps (20 spots)
- Small electrical and electronic equipment (10 spots)
- Ink Cartridges - Toner (10 spots)
- Marine litter (like ghost nets, plastic, tyres, etc. - 1 spot) - (which are coming from underwater & coastal clean ups or daily use of the areas)
- Cigarette Butts (40 spots) - (1st municipality in the entire Region of Ionian Islands)
- Used textiles (62 spots)
- Unused - non expired medicines (1 spot)

Additionally, until the end of 2023, the MCCDI plans to implement separate collection networks for the following waste streams, which are:

- Used Cooking Oils (to as many spots as possible).
- Paper and cardboard (1.100 yellow bins +

3 dedicated vehicles)

- Plastic or/and metal objects (more than 150 red bins)
- and for the Bio-waste stream.

More specifically, the separate collection network for the bio-waste stream will include:

- 2.000 bins for In-Home Composting
- 20 large bins-containers for separate collection of the “green waste”
- 1.000 brown bins for separate collection of all the rest “organic waste”
- 6 dedicated garbage trucks only to collect the bio-waste stream in total.

In total, the Municipality intends to offer to its citizens 15 to 17 different bins in the public network in order to effectively support recycling with “Separate at Source”, ensuring their separate collection. Additionally on these, the municipality is intending to proceed to the establishment of proper public infrastructures for the separate collection of as many as possible waste streams. More particularly:

- A Network of all the kinds of Green Points (1 Big, 1 small and at least 5 mobile green points which they will accept from 12 to 21 streams of waste) and
- A Network of at least 15 “Smart” Recycling Corners (with deposit refund schemes (DRS) to encourage consumers to recycle at least 4 streams of recycling materials (plastic, metal, glass, paper + tetra-Pak).

There were also wins on the other City Goals that have been described before but to save time, we will only refer to the most important of them, which are:

- We have created for the first time a FREE public Wi-Fi network which will be extended geographically during the following years.
- We have modernized the main informative website of the municipality under the

name **corfu.gr/** , and developed **3 completely new websites for the 1st** time in the history of the island, **each one dedicated to a different field**, which are the **recycle.corfu.gr/**, **visit.corfu.gr/** and **smart.corfu.gr/**, with more than **600.000 page views until today**.

- We are participating in the digital platform “Novoville” for managing our citizens’ requests and promoting citizen engagement and nearly in a 2 years’ time period, the requests and the problems that they have been solved are more than 14.000.

- We have replaced the old street lighting bulbs with LED lamps to reduce the energy consumption from the public lighting system.

- We have signed and developed the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), a comprehensive plan for the management and planning of sustainable urban mobility for our Municipality, with a time horizon of 15 years.

- and more ...

I would like to emphasize that the ICC completed its two-year course in December 2022 and due to its success despite the difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic the programme has been renewed for another 24 months by the European Commission, continuing helping the participating cities get even closer to their goals in the Digital Era.

Also, we are pleased to announce that we have been accepted as a Core City once again, in the new phase of the ICC Programme, which comes under the name **ICC 2.0** and we are going to continue to be part of this great European programme but also we are going to continue our efforts to become one of the most sustainable islands of Europe.