

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021

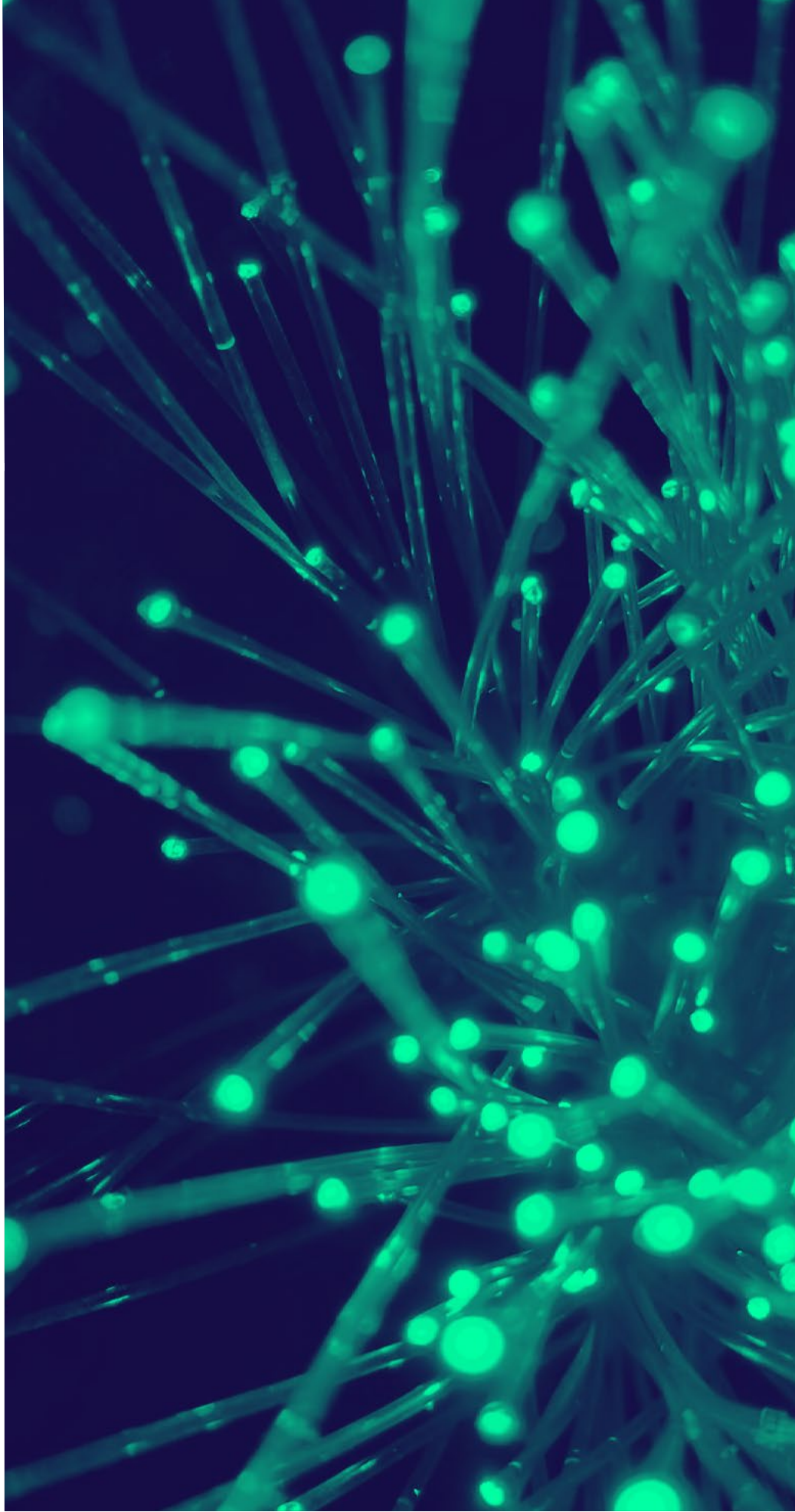


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The mission of DECIDO is to demonstrate the ground-breaking impact of the adoption of innovative methodologies, tools and data, enabling the effective development of better evidence based policies by public authorities.
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INTRODUCING DECIDO PROJECT

DECIDO will serve as an intermediary between the public sector, the citizen science world and the European Cloud Infrastructure (ECI) through the direct collaboration with European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and will provide storage capacity and processing power through EGI infrastructure. The project will have two phases of experimentation to test the DECIDO solutions in 4 pilots across Europe:

1. Pilot on Forest fires in Kajaani, Finland: prevention and protection against forest fires; Procedures to mitigate damage to nature, infrastructure and life.
2. Pilot on Floods, on Response to the Pandemic and on Psychological Protection of Youth, Italy: improve design of emergency policies related to floods and weather alerts in two areas of the City of Turin (Meisino Park and Murazzi), to the social crisis following a

big pandemic event, to the psychological problems of young people.

3. Pilot on Power Outage in Greek Municipalities, Greece: power outage management of public infrastructure and cultural assets of Greek municipalities via emergency response mechanisms.
4. Pilot on Wildfires in the Aragon Region, Spain: improve the design of emergency policies related to wildfires and management of controlled fires.

The results of the pilot experimentation will display to what extent the initial objectives of the project have been reached:

- Objective 1: Enable public authorities in adopting data and cloud technologies (from the PA and research sector) to support evi-



dence-based policies

- Objective 2: Support emergent strategic management in order to ensure that data can contribute to evidence-based policy making processes aligned with political objectives and priorities.
- Objective 3: Facilitate the active involvement of local actors in data generation, how it is analysed and used within the policy making life cycle.
- Objective 4: Assess the transformative impacts, benefits and risks (including ethical) of the deployment of big data tools and methodologies and the use of cloud infrastructure in the following disaster risk management domains: floods, forest fires, power outage.
- Objective 5: Pursue sustained use of data analytics and cloud infrastructure in policy making.

According to the aforementioned objectives, the DECIDO project will release the following outputs:

- Output 1: Recommendations
Identification of a set of pathways, recommendations, and lessons learnt addressing Public Authorities in the transition towards the use of the European Cloud Infrastructure and the application of evidence-based policies and co-creation in the policy lifecycle.
- Output 2: Web Portal
An easy-to-use portal will be released to define, manage and evaluate PA policies in a collaborative manner leveraging services offered by EOSC (Catalogue and Marketplace), external services/tools to EOSC, data made available by EOSC (mainly through services B2Find and EGI DataHUB) and by other data providers (e.g. European Data Portal), including Public Administrations themselves.
- Output 3: Business Plan
A robust and realistic business plan will be developed, backed up by a detailed cost-benefit analysis of ex-ante (not using DECIDO results) and ex-post (using DECIDO results).
- Output 4: Citizen Engagement

The focus for the involvement of local actors will be on: (1) the methodological side (e.g. co-creation of indicators), (2) the identification of needs and priorities, and (3) the data generation (e.g. through citizen science experiments where applicable).

The achievement of those outputs will allow to meet the expectations of the European Commission, declared during the Cloud Cluster Project workshop (held remotely on January 21st, 2021):

- Expectation 01: create analytical tools that enable public administrations to reuse common infrastructures and data sets for the development of better targeted and more effective evidence-based policies.
- Expectation 02: engage citizens and businesses in the co-creation of the tools, thereby enhancing trust and boosting the perceived legitimacy of authorities. ■



The four Decido's pilot sites locations throughout Europe

POLICYMAKING AND LIFECYCLE

Policy making is the process of creating and monitoring policies to solve societal challenges. In this respect, it is often conceptualised as a policy cycle, consisting of several different phases, such as agenda setting, design, implementation and monitor & evaluation.

DECIDO will support and enable effective involvement of actors in all 4 phases of the policy cycle; proven through the identification, integration and application of appropriate tools and services in the project's pilot cases.

Specifically, the consortium will develop new ways and methods for using the cloud infrastructure, data and models available to public administrations which can support the policy cycle. Towards this direction, DECIDO will collaborate with the European Open Science Cloud initiative (EOSC) and will put together multidisciplinary expertise on big data, cloud, analytical technologies, simulation and in general the

inclusion of evidence in policy processes.

DECIDO will provide a mixed framework including instruments, guidelines and approaches fostering both co-creation and citizen science approaches enabling an effective involvement of actors, from policy makers to citizens, in the policy cycle.

DECIDO and DECIDO-EOSC roadmaps will provide the steppingstones for a successful transition towards more evidence and cloud-based Public Authorities and more effective involvement of communities in the policy cycle.

The result of the project will be the identification of a set of pathways, recommendations and a sound business plan directing Public Authorities through the transition towards the use of the European Cloud Infrastructure and the application of evidence and co-creation in the policy cycle.

From the technological perspective, DECIDO will identify and integrate a set of tools and services that are useful for Public Authorities to take advantage of big data and cloud technologies, and to bring the citizen to the centre of the policy cycle. ■



Policy lifecycle scheme



WILDFIRES IN NORTHERN FINLAND

Forest fires in the past years in both Russia and Sweden have caused significant damage to private property, infrastructure, nature, and life. The warming climate causes long periods of drought in the vast, rural areas of northern Europe, where monitoring, great distances and limited access all pose challenges. Following the recent wildfires that ravaged through northern Sweden in 2018, it showed that it was only a matter of time until a similar incident would befall Finland.

In the summer of 2021, the concern became reality when a forest fire broke out near the town of Kalajoki . It required 250 persons daily, and four helicopters to battle the fire for over two weeks. The fire burned 227 hectares of land area. No lives were lost in the fires.

Through the Finnish pilot in the DECIDO project, local first responders and authorities will trial the use of the DECIDO portal in a wildfire and evacuation scenario. The aim is to use the European Open Science Cloud resources through the DECIDO portal. Local authorities will use the tools to develop and improve the wildfire and evacuation policies through agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, and reviews. Through the circular approach the goal is to involve the local public authorities in developing procedures and standards and maintain them at the appropriate level, as well as have procedures in place for varying scenarios. Through planning, good practices and knowledge can be incorporated for a higher level of preparedness and improved cooperation in future incidents to minimize damages and loss of lives.

Citizens can directly contribute to the policy creation process, as documents and planning will be openly available for public opinion and discussions. Local businesses are involved in the evacuation process as an integral partner providing evacuation transportation, accommodation, food and supplies. Simulations of the Finnish pilot case will be done over the course of summer 2022 in the Finnish town of Kajaani by the Kainuu Rescue Services and Kajaani University of Applied Sciences. ■



Archive image: A wildfire in Finland in June 2020

MANAGEMENT OF WILDFIRES IN THE ARAGON REGION

The use case of the Horizon 2020 Decido project seeks to improve decision-making in the management of forest fires in the Aragon region through data analysis and the application of new technologies.

The increase in the forest mass, together with the range of the rural environment as well as the consequences of climate change have caused fires to have increased significantly in the last two decades, both in affected area and in the number of fires.

The General Directorate of Biodiversity and Forest Management has contributed strongly through the use of new technologies for their management. Currently, a large amount of data is managed on forest fires in the region, from the data generated by the different satellites, to those delivered by the forest firefighters from within the fire, data generated by aerial means, data from the inhabitants of the affected areas etc. All these data require rapid analysis by fire emergency managers in order to make the best decisions. To do this, starting from the simulators currently used by the Government of Aragon and want to introduce several layers with the available in-

formation, which will be analyzed immediately through cloud technologies and applications that help us manage and collect the large amount of existing data

For this, the use case of the Government of Aragon wants to have the engagement of the most prominent stakeholders in the fight against forest fires in order to make the tool the closest to the reality of the fires. For them we are going to count on:

- Forest firefighters
- Affected citizens
- Policy makers
- Directors and assigned personnel for fire management

From the Government of Aragon, the commitment to data management that improves our decision-making is clear and unequivocal, we have a great opportunity to improve our services to citizens through data analysis and the use of cloud applications that do not we can let go, the Decido project is a great step towards improving our management tools. ■



TORINO PILOT CASE SCENARIOS: COMBINING LESSONS FROM THE PAST AND NEW TOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

Torino, with a population of about 850.000 inhabitants is the fourth-most populous city in Italy. It's the capital of the Metropolitan City of the same name and of the Piemonte Region. It's ranked third in the Country, after Milan and Rome, for economic strength, and is one of the main university, art, tourist, scientific and cultural poles in Italy.

One among the many of its particular features is to be one of the few cities in the world to be watered by four rivers: Po, Dora Riparia, Stura and Sangone. The watercourses played an important role in shaping the identity of the city, structuring its social geography, connecting natural ecosystems, inspiring some essential urban planning points. Dora Riparia, thanks to its strength has always played a crucial economic role, powering mills since the middle age and then hosting on its banks the first industrial district after the industrial revolution. Sangone used to be a popular bathing place, while Stura is a major naturalistic oasis. Last but not least the Po River, cutting across the city, has been a production and transport site and is today a leisure site.

That means of course, on the other side, a very complex hydrogeological context to deal with (seasonal fluctuations in water levels, heavy rains) and consequently a high risk of adverse consequences from flooding. That's the reason why the City of Torino gladly joined the DECIDO project in order to better investigate evidence-based solutions to prevent, assess and manage floods. When first joining the consortium the City of Torino focused its attention precisely on floods, in the Meisino area, an historic quarter now residential with a strong community and in the Murazzi area, a former fishing and industrial district which has become nowadays one of the most attractive leisure places of the city, both located on the Po River.

For these pilot case scenarios, the DECIDO project involves the Civil Protection Department of the City of Torino. Founded back in 1987, its

activity is aiming at protecting the integrity of life, goods and settlements from damages or risks deriving from natural calamities, catastrophic events or other events that, due to their "exceptionality", might determine condition of severe and widespread danger. As a matter of fact, when talking about Civil Protection, the collective imaginary immediately associates it with natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, fires.

The public opinion often acknowledges its existence only when national top managers are interviewed by the media when exceptional events as such happen. However Civil Protection is more than that: there's a lack of information about its



Archive image: Po river in turin city centre during a flood

actual organisation, its domains of intervention, the task force it can rely upon. Besides the emergency management though, the Civil Protection also has forecast, prevention and information tasks. All these activities need a common framework, specifically a Civil Protection Municipal Plan, identifying potential risks and needing continuous updates in order to forecast and reduce the effects of disastrous events. Another very important task is to keep the citizens informed about the emergencies, about the proper behaviours and on how to cooperate. The tasks detailed in the Civil Protection Municipal Plan are carried out with resources that involve several actors: from the structures of the Municipality to volunteering associations, from firefighters to law enforcement bodies and other specialized structures. Civil Protection plays a crucial role in coordinating and directing the efforts, a role that becomes vital when an emergency happens. The project DECIDO might actually help to build a bridge of trust channelling the information from one end to the other (all the different operators involved/citizens) and vice versa.

Furthermore, the DECIDO project, that officially started during the second outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, gave the City of Torino the opportunity to explore two more pilot case scenarios, namely how the Torino Solidale initiative worked during the pandemic and how it could be improved to cope with the social crisis following the Covid19 period. Furthermore, DECIDO led to investigate the results about the psychological support to young people performed in these critical times, within the framework the Aria project. The restrictions to circulation and to direct contact during the Covid-19 emergency led the City of Torino to define a supportive territorial network to safeguard people and family units dealing with personal, social and economic distress, often related to solitude and to the absence of family networks. A complex project supporting vulnerable families, aiming at intercepting new difficulties and needs while paying attention to interculturality and to the involvement of the whole local community (private citizens, associations, businesses and enterprises), to attract and mobilize additional support measures such as the supply of commodities or services. A territorial proximity network was activated to carry out several actions such as a call centre for addressing the needs of people in general (grocery delivery, dog walking, going to the pharmacy) who couldn't leave home or ask someone else. The same

call centre was also the hub for collecting the requests of people willing to help, thus mediating and moderating the demand and offer of solidarity. The network also provided psychological support, thanks to the "Psicologi per I Popoli" association, through a specific protocol designed for people experiencing difficulties and life at home alone. The Social Services Department of the City of Torino then improved the help for elderly people activities and extended them to people with disabilities and fragilities, in coordination with the Civil Protection Department. Finally within the network the City of Torino identified a number of intermediate proximity hubs for stocking and distributing foodstuffs to volunteering associations or directly to people and family units in distress.

The Aria project, on the other hand, has been active for the past 25 years, a listening centre for young people from 14 to 28 years old, providing individual psychological help (14 to 21 years old) including WhatsApp support to young people with suicidal thoughts, organising activities and laboratories for the free time (14 to 28 years old) and offering guidance for study, work and housing autonomy (14 to 28 years old), in an inclusive and non-discriminatory context. The centre has of course been particularly stressed throughout the pandemic and increased its efforts for remote support.

Both these experiences of co-creation might provide useful tips to the DECIDO methodology and could benefit from it in defining new policies, combining lessons from the past and new tools for the future. ■



Archive image: Turin's civil protection stand



Wikimedia commons image: Turin's Murazzi view with Po river at its average water level, 2011

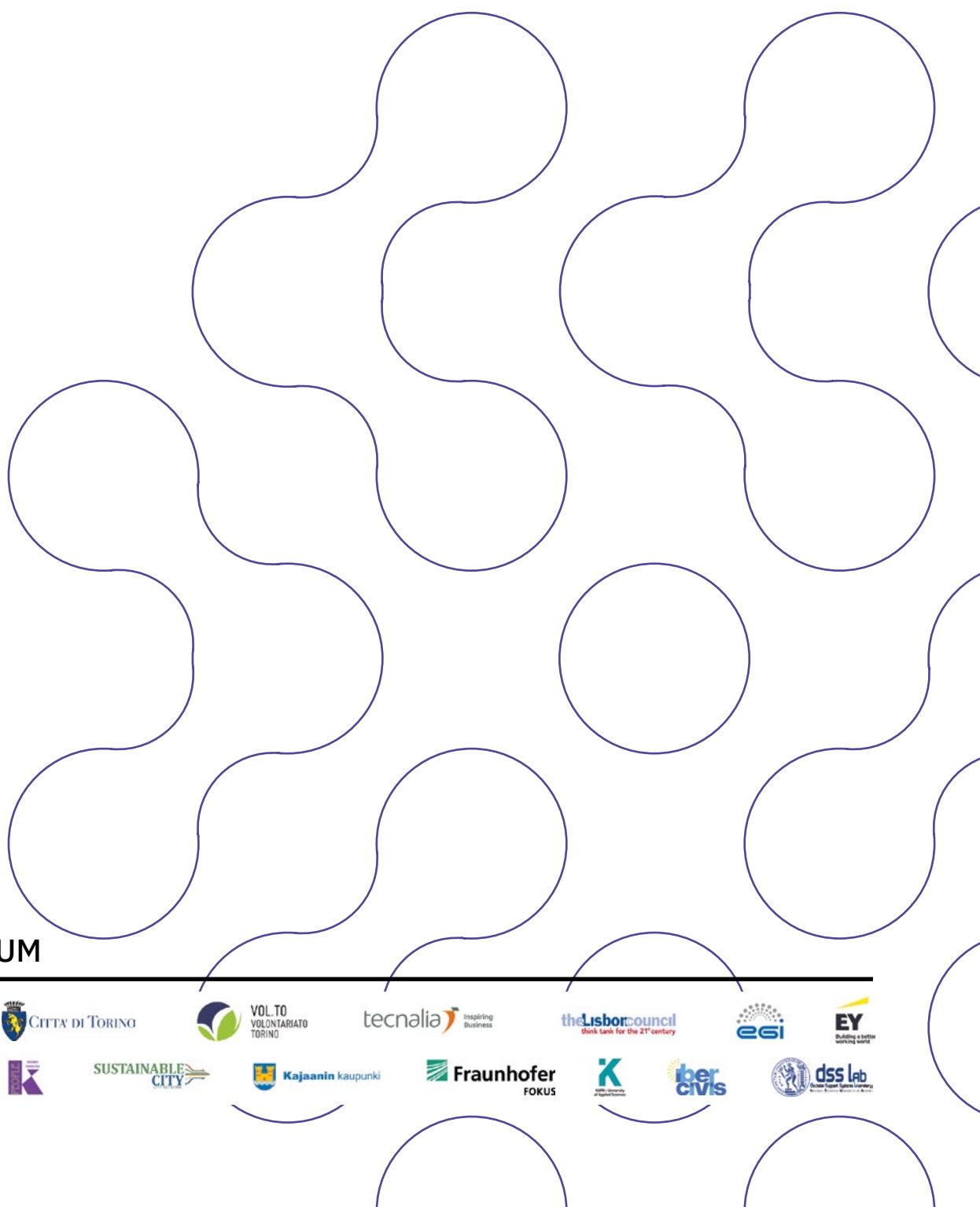
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CONSORTIUM

