



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Smart Cities for All Toolkit is now Available in 8 Languages

*G3ict and World Enabled, with support of the Microsoft corporation, make their Smart Cities for All Digital Inclusion Toolkit available in 8 languages to city leaders around the world.*

**Barcelona, November 14, 2017** – International nonprofits, G3ict and World Enabled joined by Microsoft, announced today at the [Smart City Expo World Congress 2017](#) in Barcelona that they will make the Smart Cities for All Digital Inclusion Toolkit available in five additional languages - [Arabic](#), [Hindi](#), [Japanese](#), [Korean](#), and [Marathi](#) - in addition to [English](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Spanish](#) languages versions.

According to the United Nations, most countries in the world are becoming increasingly urban. This urbanization is especially pronounced in the Global South, including Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In 2016, 1.7 billion people — 23 per cent of the world's population — lived in a city with at least 1 million inhabitants. By 2050, the share of urban population is projected to increase up to 75 per cent. Such scale of urbanization makes the concept of inclusive urban development critically important. Smart Cities have the potential to provide their citizens with a more equitable, comfortable, and secure environment. Advanced information and communications technologies (ICTs) are making Smart Cities more inclusive.

At the same time, today there are more than 1 billion people with disabilities in the world. With urbanization, many of them already live or will soon live in cities. As cities increasingly leverage technology to engage their citizens, the accessibility of ICTs will be play a key role in ensuring digital services provided by cities reach all citizens, including those with disabilities and older persons.

In 2016, James Thurston, Vice President of G3ict, and Dr. Victor Pineda, President of World Enabled, launched the Smart Cities for All (SC4A) global initiative to narrow the digital divide for persons with disabilities and older persons. In May 2017, the SC4A global initiative [launched its Digital Inclusion Toolkit](#), providing cities with a model policy for procuring technology, an inventory of three key standards that define ICT accessibility criteria, strategies for communicating the importance of digital inclusion in cities, and an alpha version of the database of Smart City solutions that could benefit persons with disabilities in cities. Today, each of these tools becomes available in five additional languages, bringing the total to eight.

“Thousands of city leaders in hundreds of cities will now be able to access critical tools in their native languages,” says Dr. Victor Pineda. “We are proud of the partnerships we are forming with leading global stakeholders and networks to quickly get these critical tools in the hands of key decision makers today.”

Availability of the Smart Cities for All Toolkit in Arabic, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, and Marathi will allow thousands of cities to review their policies in different spheres and to become truly inclusive, modern and open for everybody. Charlotte McClain Nhlapo, Global Disability Advisor at the World Bank, underlines: “To operationalize Inclusive Smart Cities, we need a suite of good tools on digital inclusion and digital accessibility. The SC4A toolkit is a welcomed contribution to advancing article 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It's also exciting to know that the toolkit will be available in 8 key languages to make it accessible to many of our partners.”

“Microsoft is excited to partner with G3ict and World Enabled to help drive the next wave of inclusive and connected city solutions. The introduction of the Smart City for All toolkit in 8 languages provides new opportunities for local leaders to ensure their community’s digital transformation reaches everyone, leaving no one behind,” said Trudy Norris-Grey, Managing Director, Microsoft CityNext. “As technology and urbanization continue to change the way governments interact with citizens, Microsoft CityNext applauds the work Smart City for All is delivering and their continued efforts to scale tools and resources globally to support city development for all.”

“G3ict and World Enabled’s Smart Cities for All initiative exposes a stark problem and describes a risk for persons with disabilities in today’s Smart Cities - a growing digital divide,” comments Vladimir Cuk, Executive Director at The International Disability Alliance. “The fact that their tools are now available in 8 languages will contribute to digital inclusion worldwide. Thank you SC4A for taking this step forward.”

“I appreciate the Smart Cities for All (SC4A) initiative for bringing out the maturity model, designed to help cities assess and benchmark their level of digital inclusion and ICT accessibility. I am extremely happy that this tool will be available free and also in regional languages,” said Prashant Ranjan Verma, General Secretary of the India National Association for the Blind. “This tool will bring the much-needed focus on digital inclusion, which often gets overshadowed by the emphasis on physical accessibility. Such tools and best practice compilation is much needed since nothing earlier was available to compare level of digital inclusion in cities worldwide. Without accessibility of ICT infrastructure and services, a large section of the population is in the danger of getting far left behind due to digital divide.”

For more information about the language localization of the SC4A Digital Inclusion Toolkit see the new blog by Victor Pineda: [Now is the Time to Build Smarter and More Accessible Cities](#).

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## **About G3ict**

The Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies is an advocacy initiative launched in December 2006 by the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in cooperation with the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at UN DESA. Its mission is to support and help implement the goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), promoting digital accessibility and Assistive Technologies. More information can be found at <http://g3ict.org>.

## **About World Enabled**

World Enabled is a global education, communications, and strategic consulting group. It supports companies and governments with the full implementation of legal mandates that promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Its work and research initiatives focus on urban planning and inclusive urban development. With its international partners, it helps build inclusive societies where people with disabilities can fully develop their talents and reach their full potential. More information can be found at <http://worldenabled.org/>.

## **About Smart Cities for All**

In 2016, G3ict and World Enabled launched a research project to assess information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility in smart cities around the world. They surveyed more than 250 experts and smart city program managers, 60% of whom responded that smart cities were failing people with disabilities. Only 18% of respondents knew of a smart city that uses ICT accessibility standards. As a result of the findings, and with support from Microsoft, the two NGOs created the Smart Cities for All Toolkit, featuring four digital tools to help those involved in city planning to make future technology projects more inclusive. James Thurston, Vice President at G3ict and Dr. Victor Pineda, President at World Enabled, lead the Smart Cities for All initiative launched in 2016. Both James and Victor are leading accessibility experts who are committed to building a broad global coalition to ensure that persons with disabilities and older persons enjoy the advances of smart cities on an equal basis with other citizens. Learn more about Smart Cities for All: <http://www.smartcities4all.org/>.

## **About Microsoft**

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