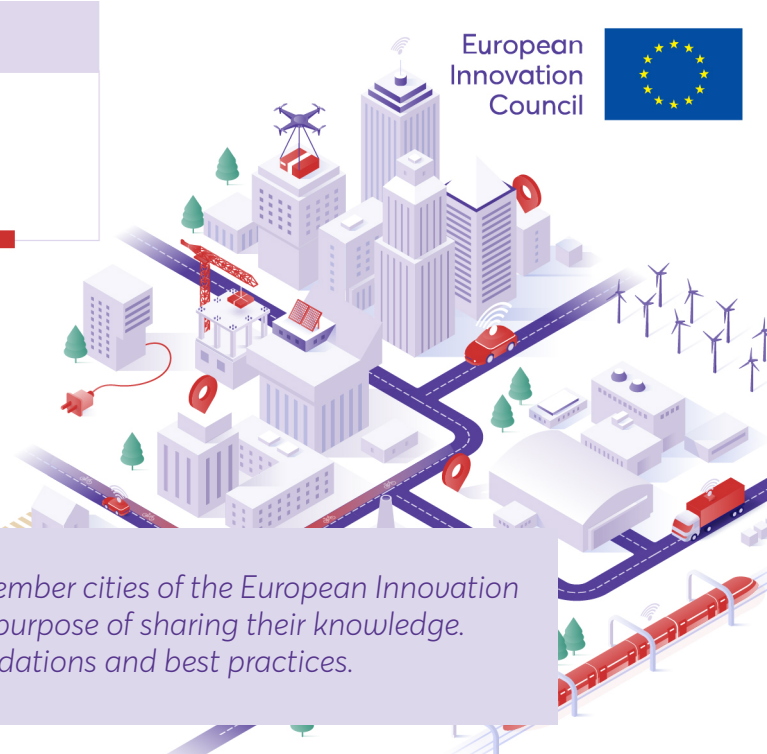European
Innovation
Council

THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF INNOVATION AWARDS

This series of factsheets has been created by the member cities of the European Innovation Council Prizes - iCapital Alumni network, with the purpose of sharing their knowledge. They include the cities' challenges, their recommendations and best practices.

HOW CAN CITIES MAP THEIR INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM?

Once the innovation ecosystem is defined, the main challenge for a city is to systematically locate and track the various innovation players in the ecosystem.

Challenges

- **Non-existent or hard-to-obtain data** on ecosystem players. In most cases, cities struggled with the lack of digitalisation of certain sectors and/or their reluctance to provide proprietary or guarded data.

- **Insufficient digital tools** to manage the information about the ecosystem. All innovation ecosystems are dynamic and can change dramatically from quarter to quarter. Most cities lack the necessary tools, or the expertise, to keep their information up to date.

- **Lack of methodology** to systematically locate and track ecosystem players beyond the well-known ones. Most cities know the popular players, but struggle to identify second- or third-degree players.

Recommendations

- Build a **participatory committee**, including the main innovation stakeholders (eg quadruple-helix approaches). Through the committee, systematically locate not just second- or third-degree players, but the key individuals in each group.

- Engage each **city's current innovation networks** for initial mapping. It is critical to maintain long-term communications with stakeholders beyond specific milestones, such as the iCapital awards.

- Focus on sustaining **fluent communication** with all innovation network members, both online and in person.

- Some cities use **existing digital tools** explicitly designed to map, maintain and share information about the ecosystem. These tools are also participatory, discharging the burden on the city's innovation team.