

# City City of Geel – expertise offer

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## INTRODUCTION

Located in a densely populated area, Geel is a city in the vicinity of large cities like Antwerp and Eindhoven (NL) in the north of Belgium in the Flanders region.

It has 42.000 inhabitants and it is part of a police zone of over 60.000 inhabitants and a fire department region of over 200.000 inhabitants.

## GENERAL CONTEXT

Geel had a dense city centre with several smaller boroughs surrounding it. It lays on a crossroads of motor and waterways. This makes an interesting combination between city and rural life, together with its own challenges to tackle climate change, connectiveness, green transition, green mobility and security.

With The Zegge, there is a large nature preserve with a unique biodiversity, together with other Natura 2000 areas. In contrast there is also a significant amount of agricultural activity in our city.

We have several Seveso companies and one nuclear facility (JRC) within our borders, offering safety and security is paramount to our citizens.

To underline the research and innovation driven spirit of our city, we are host to a college (Thomas More) and a university (KU Leuven). In the close vicinity of these centres of education, there is also an Innovation Campus, to foster spin-offs.

Our city is home to more than 2.000 SME's in a broad range of economic sectors.

Furthermore Geel is a known venue for several large events, including a yearly two-day festival that attracts around 50.000 visitors and several big events in the city centre surpassing 10.000 visitors per day.

## EXPERIENCE IN EUROPEAN PROJECTS

In the recent past we were partner in an **Interreg NWE** project called *SPIDER*. In this project we tested service design in public service. In the **Horizon 2020** project *DARENET* we are collaborating in a practitioner network to strengthen flood resilience. In the **Horizon Europe** project, *ENGAGE*, we are part of *Ki-COP*, the community of practice, enhancing societal resilience. In the project *SURV-AI-LLANCE*, which is a **IMEC.ICON** project, we are testing and developing real-time alerts on video surveillance using human behaviour recognition algorithms.

At present our city is partner in 4 European projects. NEBA (spatial planning) and MaaSolutions (mobility) in **Interreg Europe**. Innovade (digital democracy) in **Horizon Europe** and Citisense in **Urbact**.

Geel is also member of **CERIS**, the Community for European Research and Innovation for Security.

### CONTRIBUTION

We would like to continue contributing to research and development in the fields of democracy, governance, culture, social innovation, citizen engagement, security and climate change and we are actively looking for new project opportunities as a partner.

We can offer a broad expertise as a local authority, experienced in European projects. The specificities of our city make an interesting and relevant location for a variety of demonstrations, tests and trials.

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### SHORT

*Located in a densely populated area, Geel is a local authority in the vicinity of large cities like Antwerp and Eindhoven in the Flanders region. We are interested in projects in the fields of democracy, governance, culture, social innovation, citizen engagement, security and climate change. We can offer a broad expertise as a local authority, experienced in European projects. The specificities of our city make an interesting location for a variety of demonstrations, tests and trials.*