

## Press Release

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### An Innovation Incubator Takes Off: Living Labs Will Prepare Municipalities for the Smart Era

Bratislava, 11 December 2025 – Smart solutions that don't remain only on paper, stronger cooperation across sectors, and real testing of pilot projects—this is what the new innovation ecosystem brings. The Smart Transformation and Innovation Consortium Slovakia (STICS) has completed its preparatory phase. In six Living Labs, real-world testbeds, an open and functional collaboration system is gradually being tested—one that can transform data, research, and ideas into practical solutions for towns, municipalities, and regions.

STICS is methodically, scientifically, and strategically led by Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. *“Matej Bel University ensures comprehensive project management, the development of professional methodologies, coordination of Living Labs, the linkage of research with practice, and the transfer of innovations into real municipal environments. The university also guarantees the quality of data, analytical processes, participatory approaches, and the assessment of impacts generated by the implemented solutions,”* said Assoc. Prof. Vladimír Hiadlovský, PhD., Rector of Matej Bel University, emphasizing that under the university's leadership, STICS is not creating isolated projects but **systematically building a national infrastructure** for data-driven, sustainable, and intelligent decision-making.

The project also involves the Faculty of Management of Comenius University in Bratislava. *“University work is not only about producing research. Through Living Labs, we can **transfer research results into concrete solutions**, test scientific findings directly in municipal environments, and provide students with practical experience through real-world projects,”* explains Prof. Peter Štarchoň, Dean of the Faculty of Management.

Both institutions are part of the nine academic representatives among the 24 international partners currently involved in STICS. In addition to universities and research institutes, the project includes seven companies, three nonprofit organizations, two technology transfer organizations, and three municipalities.

#### Municipalities, Towns, and Regions Take Action

One of the participating municipalities is Horné Srnie. During the preparatory phase, the municipality mapped the condition of public buildings and infrastructure in terms of **energy efficiency**, as well as the potential for renewable energy use. It also focused on **wastewater monitoring** and the preparation of a systematic approach in this area.

*“The first meetings between technology partners, researchers, and our municipality already showed enormous potential. Participation in STICS can bring real solutions to everyday problems,”* commented Juraj Húserka, Mayor of Horné Srnie.

Kežmarok was equally active during the preparatory phase. The local government organized several workshops resulting in a developing **catalogue of analyses and data dashboards** to support decision-making on multiple levels.

The Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region also joined the project. It expects modern tools for **data-driven decision-making and improved public services**. *“STICS will enable better data exchange between municipalities, towns, and the region, which will make investment planning, territorial management, and the evaluation of public policy impacts more efficient,”* explained Ing. Anna Hriňová, Director of the Department of Regional Development and Spatial Planning and the main guarantor of the region’s involvement.

### A Broad Spectrum of Living Labs

Six Living Labs are fully prepared for launch. In the first phase, they were selected to cover the widest possible geographic and thematic range—**from rural and urban environments to social innovation and public services, including data infrastructure**.

At the Faculty of Management in Bratislava, the Smart Green Campus is being developed, with students helping shape its vision. It aims to provide a practical demonstration of sustainability in an urban environment and test several **green, climate, and smart solutions**.

The Territorial Data Center and TP Living Lab aims to create standardized and validated **spatial data, along with applications and services** built on these datasets. These tools will offer municipalities improved insight into their territory, its elements, phenomena, and environmental quality. During pilot activities for Horné Srnie and Kežmarok, **map applications were created focusing on transportation, technical infrastructure, environmental issues, and cultural assets**.

### A Modern Innovation Ecosystem

STICS began its preparatory phase in April 2025. In the next stage, the project will deliver concrete outputs—first prototypes, models, tools, analyses, and methodologies that partners will further develop, test, refine, and gradually publish.

The result will be a **modern innovation ecosystem** that strengthens collaboration among partners, enables municipalities to evaluate the effectiveness of solutions through prototypes before procurement, supports the development of a domestic innovation market, opens global opportunities, and offers citizens the chance to actively contribute to improving quality of life in their communities.

### Key Information about the STICS Project

The Smart Transformation and Innovation Consortium Slovakia (STICS) brings together universities, companies, municipalities, NGOs, and associations with the goal of building innovative, modern, and sustainable regions. **More information is available at [www.stics.sk](http://www.stics.sk)**.

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