Leveraging data for supporting small companies

This is one of the quick win strategies in the COM³ quick win strategy series. Find all available quick win strategies at www.ruraldigital.eu.

THE POTENTIAL OF DATA

Data is a powerful means not only to better understand SMEs but also to foster economic development in a whole region.There is an enormous potential with all the data already openly available, even more so with data that could still be harvested. Small companies can benefit greatly from access to relevant, high-quality data, to get to know their customers, to develop new services, or to create new business opportunities. Local and regional authorities can support these developments by setting up so-called public data platforms. There are, however, as would be expected, obstacles to the successful implementation of such platforms.
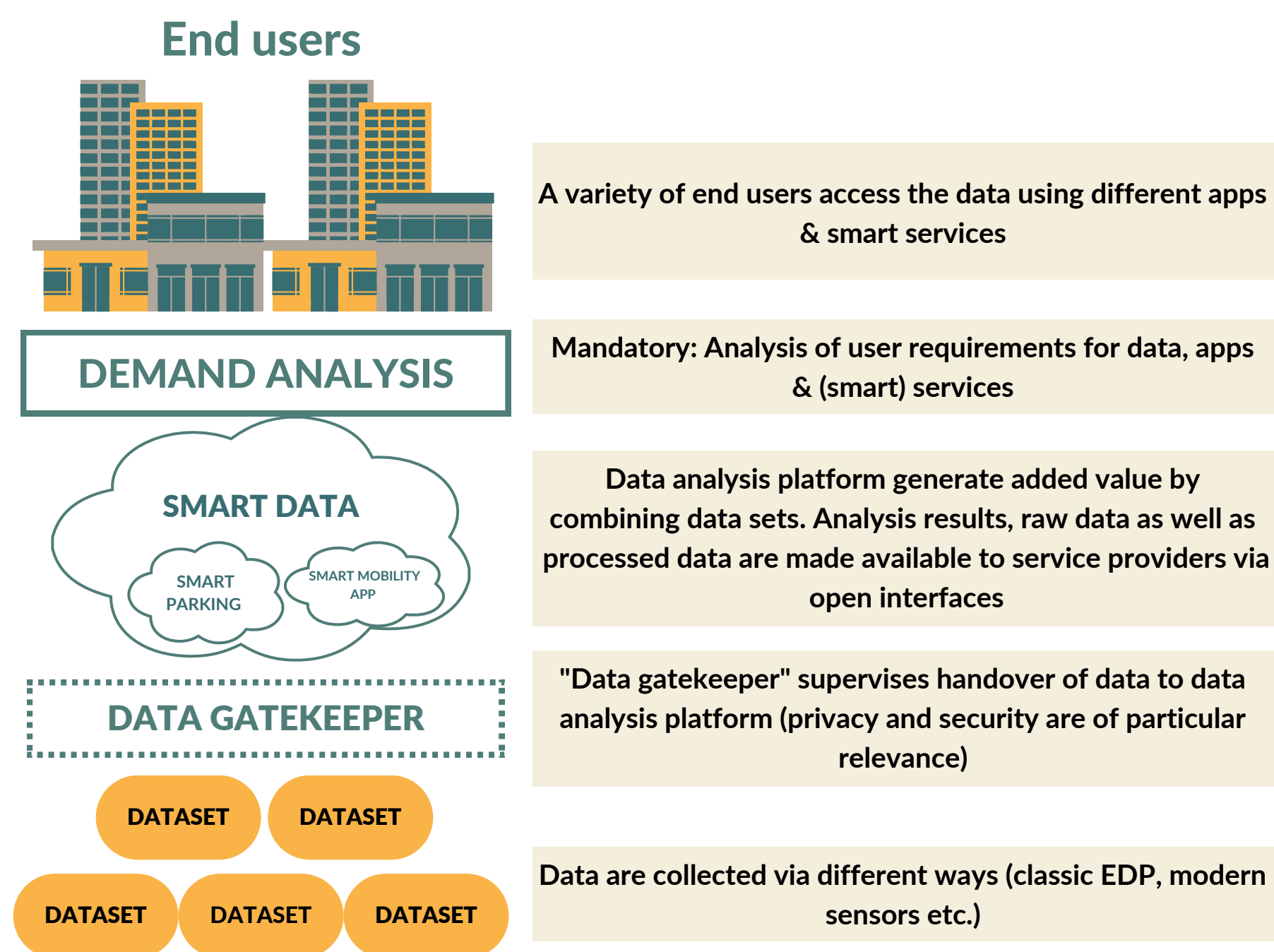
Therefore, it is important to have an overview of the policies and administrative structures in which public data platforms operate in the European Union and how to overcome possible hurdles.

DATA PROCESSING CAN BE CHALLENGING

Before it can transformed into value, data needs to be gathered, processed and made available to internal and external potential users in order for them to analyse it and base decision-making off of it. However, data can be very abstract and difficult to identify.

Working with data can be time- and labour-intensive, especially in the early stages of development. While more and more data processing tools are available, these first have to be adopted and many public and private organisations face barriers to efficiently identifying, analysing, sharing and using data.

While setting up a public data platform, local and regional public authorities need to consider contractual and legislative requirements, as well as privacy and ethical challenges. They have to ensure that data providers and data users have the right digital skills to share and handle data in a meaningful way.

End users

A variety of end users access the data using different apps & smart services

DEMAND ANALYSIS

Mandatory: Analysis of user requirements for data, apps & (smart) services

SMART DATA

SMART PARKING

SMART MOBILITY APP

Data analysis platform generate added value by combining data sets. Analysis results, raw data as well as processed data are made available to service providers via open interfaces

DATA GATEKEEPER

"Data gatekeeper" supervises handover of data to data analysis platform (privacy and security are of particular relevance)

DATASET DATASET

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Data are collected via different ways (classic EDP, modern sensors etc.)

SOURCE: BASED ON MORGENSTADT INITIATIVE. URBAN DATA PLATFORM

KEY MESSAGE

- High-quality data helps local and regional authorities and business support organisations to understand the needs of local companies and citizens
- Making data openly available creates new opportunities for local companies
- In a public context, data can be shared within public data platforms. It acts as an infrastructure for gathering and sharing data of high quality
- Data utilisation can take many forms: internally, embedded in public services, or published as open data

Utilising open data in product and service design in Intercommunale Leiedal, Belgium

Intercommunale Leiedal is the regional public partner for 13 municipalities in South-West Flanders, Belgium. Within the Interreg North Sea project COM³, and together with the creativity platform Designregio Kortrijk, Leiedal encourages companies to explore their own data as well as open data to create new products and services in the region.

The ambition has been to use data from regional companies and organisations as a foundation to create new products and services that add value for participants and the region. Partners collaborated in an inclusive process within a local data community called Imagineering of Data (IGOD). The community has developed various prototypes related to energy, waste, and space data. These prototypes are intended be established in the coming years.

Building a regional SME database in Drenthe, the Netherlands

The province of Drenthe, in the Netherlands, is a regional public authority. With an ambition to create a regional digital economy, the province develops policies and business support programs to encourage local companies in the use of big data. Within the Interreg North Sea project COM³, the Province of Drenthe decided to leverage data not only to improve its business support programmes, but also to open new perspectives for local companies.

The Province of Drenthe has developed the Regiodatabank, a regional database that compiles all the available information on local companies. Through this database, the Economics Department and the Business Support Programme gain valuable insights to further support companies. The database also fosters new regional partnerships, since businesses can also access the data and use them for their own activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Data and open data yield enormous potential for local and regional public authorities, and for small companies. In addition to the cost savings of sharing data, public and private organisations will be able to operate more efficiently and effectively. Therefore, public authorities should support these developments and establish public data platforms.
- On the other hand, contractual and legal difficulties may arise, e.g., over how data can be lawfully collected, processed, and shared. Digital competencies are therefore required to overcome these problems.
- Converting data into value presents difficulties. The quality of data depends on many factors. Therefore, data management is key and roles must be clearly defined.

Creativity Summit 2021, Kortrijk

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