

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2 pages)

A. What is your one-liner? Share the one-liner that best describes the “what” and “why” of your idea (Up to 50 words)

Democratic values may be universal, but civic responsibility, which lies at their heart, has drifted away from the priorities of governance. Athens is developing a platform to collect, support and interconnect the dynamic input of public-spirited citizens. Linking them to local government re-integrates civic initiatives in the municipal decision-making process.

B. What is your elevator pitch? If you were in an elevator with an important stakeholder from your city who’d never heard your idea – and whose support you’d ultimately need – how would you describe the idea? (Be sure to identify both the problem and the solution) You want to explain the concept clearly and convince that it’s exciting! (up to 300 words).

Recent social breakdown forced Athens to look at itself in the mirror: to face the reality of its citizens, from which local government had long been disconnected - a case no different from other big cities nowadays.

The lack of operational capacity to connect to civil society, results in a waste of creative grassroots solutions that can increase government efficiency.

With the crisis, urban life quality was left unattended and this brought to the surface an existing genuine interest of citizens to solve urban problems by themselves. Voting turn out may have lowered, but citizens’ activities have increased.

Local businesses are willing to support such activities. Experts can offer precious know-how. What is missing is a way to identify and collect best practices; an official engineering to link doers and givers.

That’s what synAthena stands for: by developing a digital platform the municipality of Athens recently mapped 357 activities by 115 citizens’ groups, ranging from soup kitchens, to alternative guided tours, to handmade pocket parks, to original anti-graffiti campaigns. It worked: we found a mechanism to reach engaged citizens who generate small-scale solutions for the city.

With adequate resources, this platform can be upgraded. Through a public lean process, the Municipality evaluates city-citizens cooperation. The City incorporates innovative know-how, motivates its staff, simplifies procedures, updates regulations and increases its efficiency, bottom-up.

Mutual accountability becomes a catalyst to accelerate needed audacious institutional improvements: Athens comes up with a governance innovation model for all growing cities that recognize the importance to keep up with the dynamic input of their civil society.

C. How has your idea evolved? Describe the way your idea has changed since your initial submission to the Mayors Challenge, specifically referencing how it has been stretched, strengthened, and/or refined. This is a place for you to highlight improvements and demonstrate how you've addressed feedback you've received since being named a finalist. (Up to 500 words).

Looking back over the past year, our participation in the Mayors' Challenge (MC) seems like a catalyst to the natural development process of synAthina. The competition call coincided with the first positive results of our beta platform launched in July 2013. We had started to connect the Municipality to citizens' groups and communicate their activities through a digital city calendar and a physical co-working space. At the time of the initial submission we were exploring how to improve and widen the platform's features so as to include local businesses and corporations that directly sponsor citizens' activities and involve experts that support citizens' groups in terms of know how. Through the coaching sessions, we analyzed how this connection with the private sector can be implemented, strengthening it with new systematic mechanisms. In terms of the economic model, we solidified a sponsorship process for citizens' activity, independent of municipal budgets, which adds to the sustainability and transferability of the concept.

However, in this strengthening process, we came to face with the elephant in the room: a complex system of administrative obstacles that repetitively inhibits citizens' participation in city affairs. Ironically, the absolute majority of activities uploaded on SynAthina are in municipal terms 'illegal', because of outdated regulations that can prohibit e.g. gardening an abandoned land plot or doing an exchange bazaar on a pedestrian street. Hence we were driven to make an audacious step back into the municipality and seize the opportunity to develop synAthina as a lever for bottom up reforms in municipal processes and regulations. Looking back, thanks to MC, synAthina has progressively made daring steps from the "People" to the "Private" and the "Public" spheres, stretching citizens' participation from being an end in itself to becoming a catalyst for Government Innovation.

After the Ideas Camp we refined our impact metrics and match making toolkits and widened the platform in terms of its networks, its process and its offering. Tapping into all relevant municipal services as well as new external partners in a standardized, traceable manner strengthens the workflow and allows for a more effective monitoring system. New technological features include targeted open calls, evaluation mechanisms at all stages, internal and external social networks, gamification and tacit knowledge management tools as well as integration with other municipal IT systems.

The finalists' announcement coincided with our pre-election sprint, adding legitimacy to the vision of synAthina, strengthening its core team and its organic partnerships. It gave us momentum to identify the preconditions for the operational incorporation of SynAthina in the municipal structure and push for the necessary political decisions that will move the project from the periphery to the core of the city's strategy for the next 5 years by establishing a new Department of Social Innovation.

2. VISION (3 pages)

A. What is the problem you're trying to solve?

Pinpointing the problem synAthina tries to address has been the most challenging part of the exercise: it involved a deep dive into systemic governance challenges. We identified the Municipality's lack of operational capacity to connect with public-spirited citizens and to incorporate their input to upgrade and update its own operations: this is a major challenge for us. The city has formal mechanisms to collect complaints and problems, but no process to incorporate practical solutions coming from civil society.

The governance system has evolved a complex web of laws and regulations, which often raises barriers to citizens' participation. Citizens that come up with creative solutions for neighborhood problems hardly ever find supporters within the Municipality. By failing to connect to its citizens and the most dynamic and creative aspects of social behavior, local government suffers a waste of invaluable resources and know-how, that could potentially increase its own efficiency and misses feedback on the real needs of the city. As the ever-changing realities of the city accelerate, the Municipality remains trapped in its own isolated structures while alienating potential partners from the fields of Civil Society, Business or Research.

B. What is your solution, and how will it work on the ground?

SynAthina is a Municipality platform that collects engaged citizens' activities in urban matters, as a way to update and improve the city's administrative procedures and regulations. We like to envision synAthina as a sieve in a social "diamond mining" process: amidst the mud of social turmoil, it brings to light existing treasures of positive social contribution and supports them to gain added value, which then also benefits local governance itself. Through monitoring citizens' input and cross-sector networking, citizens' activities are converted into a lever of pressure for government innovation.

In practical terms, our workflow is like a refinery process divided into four basic lean phases: collection, connection, evaluation, reporting.

In the collection phase we strain public-spirited initiatives from other forms of public input (such as the report of problems and complaints) in three ways: We conduct fieldwork to identify existing community groups and their planned activities. We provide an online submission process and consulting for citizens with concrete ideas to be implemented. We launch open calls for specific urban problems, triggering new waves of solutions. Through this 'raw material delivery' process all collected activities are uploaded on the digital platform of synAthina, receiving a spot on the city map and calendar.

In the connection phase, we connect (a) community groups, (b) sponsors and experts who are interested in supporting these activities and (c) relevant city officials and employees who may be needed for legal or technical service to implement the activity. Sponsors and experts are recruited through public events and presentations. City officials are trained to respond to requests through the use of simple tool-kits that help them evaluate activities. The synAthina team monitors the connection by ensuring that citizens' groups from each interested party receive coaching and targeted contacts through electronic feedback forms and meetings in-person. SynAthina offers physical space, training and co-creation sessions for the

“connected” parts to meet each other and work on the implementation of the uploaded activity. The stronger activities distilled are thus empowered to be further processed.

In the evaluation phase, synAthena decodes the data and feedback of each activity in Activity Profile Charts. “Distilled” elements gained through each activity are recorded and evaluated so as to be published on the synAthena platform monthly report. New elements can be new materials, new techniques or new processes introduced: energy saving green roof methods, discreet plexiglas banners for signage of historical buildings or smart shortcuts in municipal procedures.

In the reporting phase, all new input is communicated to relevant departments for its potential incorporation in local administration. The monitoring process is made public on the platform. Citizens are directly able to assess the pace and the extent of incorporation. The distilling process results in a unique form of public accountability for citizens’ input in change management. Ultimately, synAthena becomes a lever of pressure to improve legal gaps and outdated regulations at a higher level of government.

The workflow can be described as a kind of ongoing “positive harassment” toward the Municipality. The monitoring process openly made available to the public exposes city officials to increase efficiency and transparency of municipal services. This is however based on substantial dialogue between civil society and local government. Crowdsourced input is canalized to make a visible difference on the ground. Thanks to a lean process, synAthena retains its flexibility and is able to constantly re-adapt its mechanisms or pivot its priorities to better respond to real city needs as they are expressed through citizens’ own actions.

C. How will your city look different once the idea is implemented?

The changes in the city may be visible around neighborhoods, but it’s the invisible aspect that makes the difference. Through the synAthena pilot, we have had the opportunity to see in practice citizens’ interventions transforming the urban space and observe how tangible, visible results lead more citizens to action. Wider metropolitan Athens, with a population reaching 3.5 million (almost 1/3 of Greece) may not stand on its feet with such small-scale activities, but the multiplier effect boosted by synAthena can lead to thousands of activities on an annual basis, which can range from sports events in public gardens to street work for the homeless. A major new dimension of synAthena has to do with the platform now explicitly offering training and networking activities which, in some instances, can lead civic projects to a pre-incubation phase as social enterprises.

Nevertheless, as the changes in the city become visible around neighborhoods, it is the deeper invisible aspect that makes the immense long-term difference. SynAthena fosters relationships of trust and cooperation and reveals a new, proud city identity based on ownership and participation, while increasing administrative efficiency. The change goes beyond aesthetics, it is about a systemic shift in governance, matching bottom up citizens’ input with official policy-making. It’s about turning the Municipality from a distant over-regulator to a credible facilitator and accelerator of innovative and effective solutions for the city with its own citizens’ collaboration.

D. What are the elements of the idea that are new and innovative vs. (1) what you already have in place in your city and (2) similar programs in other cities?

Athens is the first city in Greece where an official governmental body has given public step to community groups whose activities bring positive results to the city's quality of life. By "public step", we mean that all activities are given official recognition, equal space and support, no matter whether they come from an established NGO or just a group of friends in a remote neighborhood. Up to now, informal citizens' initiatives were excluded from municipal attention and cities missed the opportunity to connect to precious creative resources. Even in countries like the US with longer tradition in volunteerism, we did not see authorities creating tools for the informal city.

Another first for Athens is that the synAthina digital platform collects from its citizens' solutions rather than problems. Recently launched apps such as SeeClickFix in the US or PireApp and CityofErrors in Greece function as innovative complementary mechanisms to the existing municipal phone lines or to the city ombudsman which exclusively collects complaints. Instead of words and images, synAthina maps and records actions, real-life solutions implemented by community groups which bring into municipal services new and tested elements.

The synAthina platform is also innovative in terms of its economic model and its networks. Activities, which are usually small-scale, are attractive to sponsors and experts, because their needs can be mostly covered with in-kind sponsorships or know-how and they provide visible results in the public space. The platform allows community groups to seek support from small businesses locally related to an activity as well as larger funding from matched CSR programs. Unlike crowdfunding platforms for urban projects like Neighbor.ly or CitizInvestor.com, through its 'Urban Gift registry' tool SynAthina matches givers and doers focusing primarily on in-kind sponsorships. Bypassing complex official funding mechanisms, the flow of citizens' activities becomes autonomous.

Unlike many citizens' participation platforms using technology as an end to itself, synAthina offerings are primarily developed in the physical sphere. Delivery channels are based on fieldwork, in-person coaching and workshop sessions. While using the digital platform as an invaluable tool to record and disseminate citizens' activities, we acknowledge that social innovation can only take place by building new human relationships out in the real world. Crowdsourcing data becomes obsolete if not connected to real life urban needs, identified in common with both officials and citizens.

Last but not least, synAthina innovates in terms of process, engineering citizens' engagement output back into the Municipality. By matching uploaded activities with relevant Municipal Departments horizontally, useful elements are decoded and introduced to administrative operations. The communication and regulation process is traceable and provides incorporation indicators to reinforce relevant changes in technical municipality services. Moreover, traceable data made public is further used as pressure trigger for increased accountability and an accelerator of regulation changes. While most authorities seek to change citizens by imposing regulations, synAthina develops mechanisms that enable citizens and city officials to change authorities together. At a national level, the synAthina model is definitely a first; at an international level, we have not identified a government tool with such a combination of innovative elements in terms of configuration, offering and experience.

3. *IMPACT (2 pages + Impact Template)*

A. What is the breadth and depth of the problem you're addressing?

We define breadth of the problem as the size of the population it affects. The problem we are addressing is fractal in nature and intertwined with systemic deadlocks that concern communities beyond the 664.000 residents of the City of Athens and the 3.5million inhabitants of the Athens metropolitan area. The exclusion of citizens' participation from public affairs is hard to be measured for two reasons: first, it has for years been understood and measured according to a limited definition of volunteering and involvement in NGOs. Second, because civil society in Greece remains institutionally excluded and data available is unofficial and irregular. Our experience shows that widening the notion of volunteering constitutes a global challenge.

We perceive depth of the problem in two indicative factors go way back before the Greek crisis: first, the problem has reached basic social attitudes. Public-spirited citizens that have been increasingly developing creative solutions for the city often operate in isolation or perceive themselves as marginal to the system. Second, the problem has reached issues of transparency and corruption. Recent OECD studies show that only 13% of Greek citizens trust public institutions while 98% consider corruption a major problem and take government inefficiency as a given.

Administrative reforms are often introduced by costly external consultants without the engagement of relevant stakeholders and social groups. This results in lengthy reports that are often irrelevant to public servants and disconnected from the needs and solutions identified by citizens on the ground. As outsourcing social change is being proven ineffective in the large scale, insourcing and crowdsourcing mechanisms ought to be developed organically, starting from small-scale tangible paradigms.

B. What evidence can you provide to suggest that the proposed solution will work and that it will address the problem?

SynAthena already provides positive evidence thanks to our pilot phase that shows tested results concerning initial stages of our proposed workflow. Its new phase of maturity serves an admittedly grand vision related to systemic change; but the lean process it follows is delivering benefits for the city from day one. Quantitative and qualitative data deriving from its pilot operation allows for optimistic projections for its future impact on municipal efficiency and policy-making.

Over the past 12 months, SynAthena has managed to map and connect 115 community groups and disseminate 357 activities. Acknowledging the imaginative, energetic and participatory elements of different self-initiated activities, these figures alone foretell substantial benefits for the city.

Upgraded features that we are envisaging for synAthena through this proposal have proved effective at the experimental level. Without any formal matchmaking mechanism so far, synAthena has already attracted 45 sponsors, out of which 16 were matched to activities that had tangible results in the city: 25 shops on Athinas Street turned their vandalized security grilles into canvases for a permanent nocturnal photo exhibition; 7 abandoned shops in a dark arcade near the central square were revitalized as workshops for young artists.

Co-creation workshops we have run rather instinctively have validated the assumption to introduce new elements and expertise into municipal operations through community activities. For example, by uploading plans for a light installation on synAthina, a community group received bulbs, cables, permits, scaffolds and on-site support; the municipal electrician got “contaminated” by their enthusiasm while gaining know-how on new LED technology; a local businessman got to test a new product and access to promotion channels in the city, while gaining ownership and pride on his shops’ neighborhood. And most importantly, the street was lit - for all.

Although we do not have the tools to monitor citizens’ requests adequately at this point, we do see a gradual shift in expectations on behalf of engaged (and formerly enraged!) citizens. The first 47 answers to synAthina’s first anniversary evaluation survey, reveals 75% satisfaction rates by pilot platform users. The digital platform has reached 30.000 unique viewers and the synAthina facebook posts reach over 6.000 users per week. Considering 56% internet usage in Greece, these numbers have surpassed any existing service/product developed by local government. But the most important is that synAthina has dynamically entered the public debate: it has received extensive media coverage, achieved vocal acceptance by all candidates in the recent mayoral elections and has generated high expectations by Athenians as a bold municipal experiment.

C. How do you plan to measure the outputs, short-term outcomes and long term impact of your project? (Explain the overall plan in your application and use the attached template to list the outputs, outcomes and long-term changes)

SynAthina’s impact will be reported through the digital platform with open datasets. The core team of synATHina will be responsible for measurements, supported by their IT external collaborators. In the outputs, we measure continuous collection of civil society activities on the provided digital city calendar, which displays both past and future activities at all times. The team will decode each activity into the new elements it brings in, displayed on regular Activity Profile Charts. Thus, the synAthina staff will be able to track all developments of an activity in relation to municipal services, sponsorships and expertise introduced.

Short-term outcomes are displayed in monthly and quarterly reports that are submitted to the Mayor through the city council. Monthly reports measure cooperation rates between city officials and community groups. Quarterly reports assess the extent of incorporated simplifications in procedures and new techniques by the municipality services.

Long-term impact is assessed in bi-annual reports. Measuring rates evaluate the expected increase in governance credibility and efficiency by (a) calculating the number of new community groups gradually appearing on the platform, (b) calculating the percentage of new elements incorporated in the city departments over the total number of new elements introduced and (c) announcing changes in regulations resulting from community groups’ implementation demands.

D. When will you first be able to measure impact?

We can foresee initial measurable impact figures four months after the launch of the upgraded synAthina platform. The rate of new community groups appearing through their activities in the platform could already be calculated for the past year. This reflects a growing sense of collaboration between city and citizens. Measurements concerning the Acceptance

Rate of government services will come six months later. Regulation changes are longer to expect. It is hard to calculate external factors such City Council or Parliamentary agendas.

4. IMPLEMENTATION (3 pages + budget template)

A. What are the key drivers of the costs in your budget, and are there any risks of overrun?

The key drivers of the costs in our budget are primarily human resources and infrastructure. The project implementation is based on an interdisciplinary team with comprehensive understanding of the vision and workflow of synAthina. In order to cover all dimensions of the platform operations, the team is made of both city officials and external experts, as well as rotating scouts and interns from Civil Society. The MC funding is strategically used as yeast to grow comprehensive skill sets and partnerships within the Municipality: External experts are hired on short term contracts and their job description includes coaching and gradual transfer of know-how to selected city staff so that these positions can be passed on to three permanent public servants after the initial 3-year period.

The next driver of the costs is infrastructure. Digital tools, physical co-working spaces and equipment are all part of it. Once this upgraded infrastructure is acquired, a 3-years implementation program with measurable impact can reposition the project at the core of the municipal strategy. Beyond this timeframe, we expect that costs in human resources, digital and physical maintenance will be mostly integrated in the city budget (allowing for absorption of relevant national or EU funds) and partly covered by local sponsors and partners. The technological stack of the project is not licensed based but open source and scalable to unlimited amount of users without budget overruns.

There are no risks of overrun in the implementation and outcomes of community activities. Activities rely on the autonomous matchmaking process described above. After the first three years of implementation, once the tools are set and the team has acquired its fluent collaboration with municipality staff, the maintenance of synAthina will be incorporated in the updated structures of the municipality. Interestingly, the driver cost of the basic idea is low: to date synAthina was developed by one full-time advisor to the Mayor and two part-time assistants coming from the community of urban activists. Its pilot platform and services were realized on a tight budget, over-exceeding expectations in terms of cost-effectiveness. Despite its strong transferability potential, this is not sustainable in the long-run. To scale it up into the robust governance innovation idea we are suggesting, it needs adequate human resources and infrastructure.

A possible risk of overrun may have to do with the popularity of our idea and its visible potential to spread to other Greek and European cities. It is difficult to calculate at this stage both the travel expenses and human resources that will be required for the exchange of know-how with other cities, and the income that can be possibly generated through such consulting.

B. What are your major project milestones and when do you expect to achieve them, such as the first prototype or pilot, the launch, and the first opportunity to collect data on outcomes and impact?

In the diagram below, one can see a clear separation between work done to date and future work. Everything preceding January 2015 belongs to the promising pilot phase of synAthina. The initial digital calendar was launched in July 2013 and the first co-created physical working space was inaugurated in October 2013. Elements of its proposed expansion

were tested between our first submission to MC and Ideas Camp. In the case we are honored with a MC prize, we will be able to set up the organizational structure of synAthina, build the executive team and arrange some of its workspaces by February 2015. The upgraded digital platform and mobile application can be launched by March 2015. Outputs can be collected in due course and we can have outcomes first measured by June 2015. Regarding the long term impact, our first metrics measuring the rate of new community groups “seeding” on our platform will be ready by September 2015, and one year later we will be able to “harvest” data on simplification of municipal processes and improvements in regulations.

C. Who is the city/local government team behind your project, including:

- **The project lead (person or organization)**
- **The core team working with the project lead**
- **The organizational structure of the team, noting who will be dedicated full-time to the project, and any positions requiring new staff hires**

The implementation of the project is backed by the three Municipality Officials that participated in the MC Ideas’ Camp. SynAthina’s concept was developed by an external Advisor to the Mayor for Civil Society Networking, a trained social anthropologist. Today she is among the elected candidates for the City Council and expected to take a higher position in the municipal structure that will allow for closer and more effective collaboration with officials and other staff. The second in-house person is a currently Advisor to the Mayor in Urban Planning. He joined the team after Athens was named finalist to help develop the idea more towards the core of the Municipality. As Policy Advisor of synAthina, he will leverage on yearlong experience with municipal processes to monitor and evaluate synAthina’s impact in administrative reforms. The third official is the Managing Director of the Development Agency of the Municipality. He has been Financial Advisor of synAthina since the early days and is key to the financial planning and management of the project. The Project Manager will continue to work on a full-time basis, while the two advisors are hired on a part-time basis so as to keep in part their positions in other Municipal Departments and thus provide constant feedback from within the system.

The project budget includes a full time assistant to the Project Manager, who will support the overall coordination of the workflow. The synAthina core team is to be strengthened with the hiring of three full time employees: a Communications Officer running the press office, social media and international relations; a Public Engagement Officer focusing on networking with community groups, social events and co-creation workshops; and a Corporate Social Responsibility Officer running the ‘Urban Gift Registry’ and matchmaking processes with sponsors. Because of lack of relevant skillsets in-house, these positions will be initially covered by external experts. The abovementioned core team of synAthina is to be supported by a full time Secretary and 2 full-time interns. The 6-month internship scheme is to be developed in partnership with other Municipalities interested in the model, so that their staff can get hands-on experience of synAthina operations.

D. Who are all the stakeholders outside of city government you'll need as partners in order to implement your idea, and what is the level of commitment? (For example, do you have a signed agreement with the partner, a verbal agreement or no agreement but plan to approach them?)

External partnerships are substantial for the development of synAthina at all stages. The key stakeholders, formal and informal citizens' groups have already demonstrated a high level of commitment to the idea. In fact, the two part-time assistants that passionately co-created the pilot platform originally came from the popular urban activism community "Atenistas". Both youngsters' involvement is expected to become full-time, while two more part-time scouts will be hired on a 6-month rotational basis from the pool of synAthina network to further expand the platform's outreach.

In terms of strategic consulting, we have already a verbal agreement with Place Identity, a dynamic Social Enterprise focusing on Citizens' Engagement and Urban Regeneration that is running some of the most popular social projects and has received a European Social Innovation Award. Our partnership has been tested through the development of the SynAthina co-working space and joint participation in the Actors of Urban Change program. Based on the founding members' substantial contribution in the development of the MC proposal, in the case of an award, we have a verbal agreement for a 3-year contract that will engage experts on their side in both the design and implementation of our Citizens' Engagement Strategy.

In terms of IT support, we have a verbal agreement with Crowdpolicy, a digital leader which provides technical and policy support to the Municipality, also involved in major government innovation projects. Crowdpolicy was the developer of the synAthina beta platform and its co-founder Giorgos Karamanolis attended Ideas Camp, gradually expanding the digital innovation toolkit of the platform.

E. What are any implementation risks, and how are you addressing those concerns? Include any groups and/or parties who might oppose your idea and explain how you will overcome such opposition.

In a city experiencing a financial and humanitarian crisis and the rise of political extremism, synAthina was destined to take major risks since its inception: despite the risk of frugal municipal cashflow, we managed to launch the initiative through personal contributions, in-kind sponsorships and applications for foreign investment. We took the risk to give the key of the synAthina co-working space freely to interested community groups, inspiring a new form of trust.

Catering for aesthetics over functionality, forgetting to acknowledge publicly a sponsor, messing citizens' activities with political campaigns, setting overloaded schedules, are mistakes that we have already committed and learned from. It is our willingness to face multiple failures and undertake repeated experimentation that has turned synAthina into a seedbed for Social Innovation.

At the end of the day the major risk we face is political in nature. Although our Mayor supports the vision of synAthina, the breadth and depth of the problem we are tackling will require bold political moves internally and externally, downwards and upwards, which risk to cause turbulences. "Necessity is the mother of taking chances" they say. Unlike usual divisive

confrontations, the challenge is to bridge the old and the new through inclusive communication strategies. Our experience shows that such risks and audacious moves are well worth taking.

5. TRANSFERABILITY (1 page)

A. What two to three key resources will other cities need to implement the idea?

The key resources any city would need to implement our idea are, as stated above, an interdisciplinary team, a digital platform and a hospitable working space for partnership building. Most cities have internal government capacities to incorporate all three. It is crucial for the team to include external rotating partners, who are more effective in reaching out to the diverse communities of each city and can bring new elements, practical processes and fresh mentalities required to implement the idea effectively in a different context.

B. What two to three key challenges will other cities face as they try to implement your idea? How do you think cities will be able to overcome these challenges?

Among challenges spread all the way through the process, we identify two basic ones: (a) Invisible best practices: The team has to go beyond traditional research methods and work hours. Constant fieldwork, participation and sharing are key. (b) Resistance to change: The team must be ready to face internal resistance to change by public servants. But this is natural. Our process stresses collaboration and is paved by opportunities to make all parties walk in each other's shoe.

C. Is there evidence of demand for your idea in other cities (e.g. data that indicates demand from other cities, something you heard at camp, or feedback you've received since your idea became public)?

Since the launch of our pilot digital platform in July 2013, we immediately had an interest from the second largest city in Greece, Thessaloniki which has just launched the "sister" platform of synAthina, named after us, "synThessi". Similarly, inhabitants from the 35 neighboring municipalities composing the metropolitan area of Athens have shown interest in the concept. At an international level, we are already working with Nicosia (Cyprus) and Amsterdam (Netherlands) who are keen to implement similar practices and join a European Network of Cities based on synAthina. As our project kept maturing and developing through the Mayors Challenge process, we have succeeded in creating a new working group by the Executive Committee of the EUROCITIES Network in order to respond more efficiently to the growing interest expressed for the synAthina model from cities across Europe.

D. Can you make a compelling case for why other cities will want to implement your idea (for example, by explaining why it is an improvement over existing solutions, by detailing the business case and value proposition, and/or by demonstrating its potential to "go viral")?

It is far from a coincidence that all 21 finalists of Mayors Challenge expressed a concern about the growing distance between local government and its citizens. Most cities have structures to attract volunteers and inspire service. SynAthina shifts the model inspiring those that are no volunteers, but citizens in action. The synAthina model is cost effective because it is

based on open source technology processes connecting existing forces, and its lean model allows for step by step implementation with rapid tangible results for the city. Leading by example inspires: seeing visible impact -however small-scale- spread throughout the city, unleashes imagination and confidence, triggering a multiplier effect. We tend to complain about inefficient local government, but changing it is in our hands. In fact, the name of our platform is not random: it is the first half of an ancient Greek proverb meaning “if you want the help of the goddess Athena, then use your own hands first to help”.