



Provinciale Staten

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Ons kenmerk DOC-00789502
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Uw kenmerk -
Maastricht 4 juni 2025
Verzonden 4 juni 2025

Onderwerp

Mededeling portefeuillehouder inzake Brightlands Limburg Region als co-host ICF Event 2026

Geachte Staten,

Zoals per mededeling portefeuillehouder van 19 maart 2025 ([GS DOC-00759694](#)) aan uw Staten gemeld, is de Provincie Limburg onder de noemer 'Brightlands Limburg Region' lid geworden van het Intelligent Community Forum (ICF). Deze wereldwijde federatie biedt meer dan 200 regio's wereldwijd de mogelijkheid om ervaringen te delen en van elkaar te leren over innovatie ten behoeve van regionale ontwikkeling. Wij hebben u daarbij ook gemeld dat Limburg dit jaar is genomineerd voor de titel 'Intelligent community of the year'. Deze nominatie is een erkenning voor de inspanningen die we als regio doen rond bijvoorbeeld de Einstein Telescope, de Brightlands Campussen en de verduurzaming van Chemelot.

Op drie momenten in het jaar organiseert het ICF verspreid over de wereld, conferenties waarin regio's elkaar kunnen ontmoeten. Elke conferentie markeert tevens een stap in het proces van de verkiezing van de 'Intelligent community of the year'. Wij zijn verheugd u te kunnen melden dat een van deze conferenties volgend jaar in Limburg zal worden georganiseerd. Wij kijken er naar uit om in juni 2026 vertegenwoordigers van regio's uit alle delen van de wereld te ontvangen en hen te inspireren met de innovaties die Limburg te bieden heeft. Tijdens de conferentie worden tevens de 7 laatst overgebleven genomineerden voor de titel van dat jaar bekend gemaakt.

Het ICF heeft het nieuws over de conferentie van volgend jaar zojuist via een persbericht wereldkundig gemaakt, dat wij u hierbij doen toekomen.

Gedeputeerde Staten van Limburg
namens dezen,
S.H.M. Satijn



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PRESS RELEASE

Brightlands-Limburg Region to Host the Intelligent Community Forum's 2026 Top7 Conference & Announcement

(4 June 2025 – New York City, NY, USA & Limburg, The Netherlands) – The Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) announced today that the Brightlands-Limburg Region will host the 2026 Top7 Conference and Announcement, the second phase of ICF's annual Awards Program. The event will bring together thought leaders from the global intelligent community movement for workshops, panel discussions, and keynote addresses, and will provide regional and international attendees with the opportunity to tour the Limburg Region, which exemplifies intelligent community development.

The conference will also feature the announcement of the [Top7 Communities](#) of 2026, finalists in ICF's annual Intelligent Community Awards Program. The Top7 Communities are seven leading examples of excellence in intelligent community development in line with ICF's [Community Accelerator Strategy](#).

The Brightlands-Limburg Region made its debut in the Intelligent Community Awards as a Smart21 Community this year. A highlight of the Region is its four Brightlands campuses in Maastricht, Heerlen, Sittard-Geleen and Venlo. At these locations, more than 30,000 innovative entrepreneurs, talented researchers and promising students work every day on international breakthroughs in the field of sustainability, health, nutrition and digitalization.



The agreement was signed by ICF Executive Director Matthew Owen and the Regional Minister for Economy, Finance and Business Operations and Public Affairs for the Province of Limburg, Stephen Satijn, pictured above, on 26 May.

“It is an honour for the Province of Limburg and the Brightlands Campuses to co-host the Intelligent Community Forum’s 2026 Top7 Conference & Announcement,” said Regional Minister Stephan Satijn. “By welcoming global innovators to Limburg, we reaffirm our commitment to shaping a smarter, more sustainable, and truly connected future for our region and beyond. We look forward to the opportunity to inspire and be inspired, as we help build more intelligent communities for the future.”

“The ICF is delighted to return to The Netherlands, where so much innovation has fed our movement over the years,” said ICF Co-Founder Lou Zacharilla, who visited Limburg and the Brightlands campuses in March. “The Brightlands concept for the region represents a branding for one of the world’s most diverse and thriving hubs for innovation. People will be amazed by what they see there. It will also be obvious to guests that the quality of life is central to success. I am pleased they will get this chance to show this hidden gem to the world. We look forward to bringing our Top7 Announcement and conference there in 2026.”



ICF Co-Founder Lou Zacharilla, Limburg Governor Emile Roemer, and Regional Minister Stephan Satijn following the announcement of Brightlands-Limburg Region as a Smart21 Community of 2025. March 19 in Maastricht, Netherlands.

More about the ICF Intelligent Community Awards Program

Candidates are evaluated based on six Factors that make up the [Accelerator Strategy](#), which provides a framework for understanding how communities can build inclusive prosperity and

grow social and cultural strength amid the disruptions of the digital age. This framework also guides ICF's consulting and coaching practice for communities.

ICF announced the [Smart21 Communities of 2025](#), including the Brightlands-Limburg Region, on March 6, 2025 at the conclusion of the *Communities in Transition* conference in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The Top7 Intelligent Communities of 2025 will be announced at the *From Smart to Intelligent* conference in Las Rozas de Madrid, Spain on June 17, 2025. The 2025 Intelligent Community Awards will conclude in December at the ICF Global Summit in Binh Duong Smart City, Vietnam with the announcement of the 2025 Intelligent Community of the Year.

Nomination is open for the 2026 Intelligent Community Awards. For more information and to submit a nomination, visit www.intelligentcommunity.org/compete

About the Intelligent Community Forum

Starting in 2000 with a research project comparing cities in various nations, the Intelligent Community Forum (www.intelligentcommunity.org) created a unique, data-driven approach to development that puts citizens first while tapping the enormous economic and social potential of technology. In a world dominated by digital, ICF's mission is to help communities create innovative, sustainable and growing economies, inclusive societies and affirming cultures open to the world. We do it for communities large and small – in urban clusters, outlying suburbs and rural places – through training, consulting, assessment, certification and award programs. ICF believes that digital connectivity and technology create the opportunity for almost every community to develop a dynamic local economy and the social and cultural strengths that go with it – giving them all a chance to be great places to live, work, learn, grow, raise a family and prepare a sustainable path for the next generation.

The Forum sponsors Institutes in North America and Taiwan dedicated to the study of the movement, and national organizations in Canada and Taiwan, both home to many Intelligent Communities. In 2012 ICF was invited to participate at the Nobel Peace Prize conference in Oslo and in 2014, its model and work were recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which, according to the American government, was “aimed at creating a more flexible and responsive system of workforce development to meet the needs of employers looking to fill 21st century jobs.”

For more details on the Intelligent Community Forum's programs and publications, go to www.intelligentcommunity.org.

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