Innovation is often presented as being in the exclusive domain of the private sector. Yet despite widespread perceptions of public-sector inefficiency, government agencies have much to teach us about how technological and social advances occur. Improving governance at the municipal level is critical to the future of the twenty-first-century city, from environmental sustainability to education, economic development, public health, and beyond. In this age of acceleration and massive migration of people into cities around the world, this book explains how innovation from within city agencies and administrations makes urban systems smarter and shapes life in New York City.

Using a series of case studies, Smarter New York City describes the drivers and constraints behind urban innovation, including leadership and organization; networks and interagency collaboration; institutional context; technology and real-time data collection; responsiveness and decision making; and results and impact. Cases include residential organic-waste collection, an NYPD program that identifies the sound of gunshots in real time, and the Vision Zero attempt to end traffic casualties, among others. Challenging the usefulness of a tech-centric view of urban innovation, Smarter New York City brings together a multidisciplinary and integrated perspective to imagine new possibilities from within city agencies, with practical lessons for city officials, urban planners, policy makers, civil society, and potential private-sector partners.

André Corrêa d’Almeida is adjunct associate professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University, where he is also assistant director of the MPA in development practice program at the School of International and Public Affairs and the Earth Institute. He is also founder of ARCx-Applied Research for Change and former senior advisor to the United Nations Development Program.

Featuring contributions from:
André Corrêa d’Almeida, Nilda Mesa, Malgorzata Rejniak, Joseph Ross, and Kendall Stewart, Columbia University
Ana Isabel Baptista, The New School
Craig Campbell and Stephen Goldsmith, Harvard University
Sander Dolder, NYC Economic Development Corporation
Jessica Espey, Mihir Prakash, and Sandra M. Ruckstuhl, Sustainable Development Solutions Network
Balazs Fekete and Bernice Rosenzweig, City University of New York
Megan Horton, Mount Sinai
Jerry MacArthur Hultin, Global Futures Group
Constantine E. Kontokosta, Gerard Soffian, Stefan Verhulst, and Andrew Young, New York University
Lawrence Lennon, The Cooper Union
Christopher Lewis and Tami Lin, Independent Consultants/Researchers
Maren Maier, Mary McBride, and Paul McConnell, Pratt Institute
Jeff Merritt, World Economic Forum
Arnaud Sahuguet, Cornell Tech

“Cities today are hotbeds of innovation for sustainable development, and Smarter New York City presents a compendium of fascinating and insightful case studies of how New York City is building a smarter, fairer, and greener city. This is a brilliant, timely, and remarkably useful guidebook to promote sustainable development innovations in cities around the world.”
—Jeffrey D. Sachs, University Professor, Columbia University, and director, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network

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