



Smart Villages

ENRD LEADER Thematic Lab on Working with Smart Villages

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Activities in relation to LEADER support to smart villages

- More than 1300 projects for development of rural services
- When talking about digitalisation:
Need, will and ability to react:
innovative and creative people behind projects
 - Digital know-how for seniors and entrepreneurs
 - Digital tutor actions
 - Digitalisation of cultural heritage and other activities
 - Multiservice centers, integrated services
- Digital tools for tourism and different kind of sports
- e-health service and other services for different age groups, local experiments, planning, pilots
- e-learning, distance learning
- skills and know-how for using digital services
- digitalisation of rural businesses, new co-operation
- integration of immigrants
- certain tangible and certain intangible investments and start-up aid for rural enterprises

Actions for Smart Villages in Finland: background information



- 2008 the first national strategy for Fast broadband, **national funding** for rural broadband -> 2018
- 2016: Study for Smart countryside, governmental project
- 2017: New governmental decision for **Rural Digitalization**
- 2018: Governmental alignment: Priority of digital services (public sector)
- **Co-operation** between national administration and other actors → **Broadband Competence Office** Finland www.bco.fi
- National [Rural policy council](#): **target setting** for rural areas
- Village action association
- **Rural Development Programme 2014-2020**, regional and local actions (Leader),
 - **Broadband funding (village broadband)**
 - **Digitalisation projects**
 - **Smartest Village of Finland -competition 2018-2020**: <https://www.maaseutu.fi/en/topical-greetings-from-countryside-and-around-the-world/32-villages-want-to-be-the-smartest-in-finland/>



Barriers or challenges in the LEADER delivery system that need(ed) to be addressed

- Village action has long history in Finland
 - So, what is needed, is something more and/or different:
 - Village development plans are normal tools for villages
 - How to take the step to be smart? How to make the difference?
 - Village development plan vol 2 / goes digital / implementation and action plan
- Change of attitudes towards technology – information gap, knowledge
- Amount of elderly people: dependency ratio 146 in 2016 in Finland
- Small resources for running costs and animation in LAGs

The main success factors in LEADER support to smart villages



- Bottom up approach
- Local presence and know-how and knowledge transfer
- Network of LAG's and other rural actors, strong network
- New people and young people
- Co-operation between village actors, entrepreneurs, municipalities, educational institutes...
- Smart Villages activators / innovation brokers
- Fruitfull platform (lack of services..)
- Braveness, pilots, experimental projects -> innovations
- International co-operation, networks
- Simplified cost options
- Village action association of Finland
 - *the Village Action Association of Finland promotes and develops village action and locally initiated rural development on the national level. The Village Action Association of Finland is an umbrella organisation for regional actors in rural development.*
 - There are more than 3000 village associations in Finland
 - Association was established in 1997 when EU activity and the LEADER approach were just starting in Finland and provincial village associations had been established in eight provinces.

The current and potential scope and scale for smart villages



- **Regional or subregional or local (one LAG or more) “rainbow” plans for strategies for Smart Villages, so called cover plan for local smart village plans. Activation, networking and knowledge and information transferring.**
- **Smart Villages projects (village-level), based on cooperation at very local level. Village level innovation projects.**

Possible scale for smart villages:

- ***Economic*** – investments and actions to support (business development in) emerging value chains and local economic clusters (both agricultural and non-agricultural) based on local assets and (potential) areas of comparative advantage (biocenomy, smart tourist destinations, etc.). Smart transport and logistic solutions, smart local services and service chains and smart food chains, digitalization and co-operation of enterprises. And **connectivity** (broadband) and different models for businesses (for example social entrepreneurship)
- ***Social*** – innovations to ensure sustainable and good quality social and cultural services. Investments in skills for the future. Urban-rural linkages. Sustainable wellbeing: preventing segregation and inequality between people, improve integration of immigrants and other new comers, community, living conditions, culture, safety. Knowhow, knowledge – also silent knowledge - of villages into operation.
- ***Environmental*** – innovations to improve resource efficiency, create local energy communities, reduce the carbon footprint, enhance biodiversity, both protect and valorize environmental assets. The municipal authorities, business representatives, local residents, research institutes and experts work together to devise and tailor new cost-effective solutions to reduce emissions, especially in the contexts of transportation, housing and food. Low carbon villages : circular economy, sustainable food production and local food,
- **Importance of co-operation between every spatial scale cannot be underlined too much.**

Smartest village of Finland 2020

The Finland's Smartest Village competition challenges villages to look to the future and develop services smartly



<https://www.maaseutu.fi/en/topical-greetings-from-countryside-and-around-the-world/looking-for-finlands-smartest-village/>