Smart Villages, a new concept for rural areas

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Challenges for rural areas

- Depopulation, outmigration

- Degrading or not sufficient public services

- Not attractive enough for young people

- Lack of job opportunities

- Lacking infrastructure, latest broadband
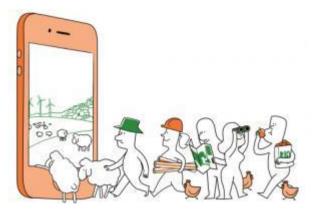
But what is a smart village?

- Definition

- Combination of connectivity and digital technologies

- Diverse needs across Europe

- Framework for developing local communities

- Locally driven initiatives

Smart villages

- Building on existing assets

- Create new opportunities

- Overcome territorial discrepancies

- Fight poverty and help social inclusion

- Rural-urban linkages

What it should bring at the local level?

- Ultimate goal is a better quality of life

- New cooperation, linkages within the community

- Better connectedness to the world and locally

- New job opportunities

- Better services

What type of actions/opportunities for smart villages?

- Precision farming increase of productivity while significantly reducing environmental impact and food safety risks

- Digital platforms for e-learning or e-health

- Circular economy

- Biobased economy

- Rural tourism

- Rural services

- Renewable energy

Financial support for smart villages

- Already existing tools: Common Agricultural Policy (several measures under the rural development programmes)

- Cohesion Policy (across the EU territory helping both urban and rural areas

- Horizon 2020 (research projects on Internet of Things, Business models for modern rural economy etc.

- Financial instruments

- Member States and Private support are essential too

Events that supported the path for a smart village concept

- Cork 2 Declaration and Cork 2 Action Plan

- Pilot project on Smart Eco-Social Villages

- EU Action for Smart Villages

- Thematic working group on Smart Villages (ENRD)

- Bled Declaration for a Smarter Future of the Rural Areas in EU

Pilot project on Smart Eco-social Villages

- Study on smart villages

- Definition of smart villages

- Best practices and case studies

- Started in 2018

- Continuation: Preparatory Action on Smart Villages

EU Action for Smart Villages

- Document published on 11 April, 2017.

- It compiles EU actions to develop villages and countryside

- Focuses on policy tools supported by EU funds and helping villages to become "smart"

- Introduces digital technologies for rural businesses, in view of supporting entrepreneurship and enhancing quality of life

- Combines operations and actions of several Commission departments dealing with rural and agricultural policy, regional policy, transport, and connectivity

Thematic working group on Smart Villages

Several meetings: discussion forum among stakeholders from different MS

1. Four integrated and strategic approaches to supporting social and digital innovations in rural services were presented.

2. The focus was on the revitalisation of rural services, concentrating more on social innovation. While the third will be dedicated to digital innovation.

3. Innovation and discussed the development and provision of digital services in rural areas and communities

4. Closing conference

Thank you for your attention