Smart Villages Support Romania

How is the concept of Smart Villages defined?

There is no official definition of 'Smart Villages' in national policies. However, in the draft 2023-2027 Romanian CAP Strategic Plan, the concept of 'Smart Villages' is mentioned as follows:

"The concept of 'Smart Villages' can be supported in the framework of Local Development Strategies (LEADER), which involves smart village development projects that aim to capitalise on the knowledge of local communities to identify solutions using technology and innovation to improve the quality of life in rural areas, for reducing depopulation and demographic handicaps, improving the quality of local health and safety services, the transition to a low-carbon, circular economy or social/administrative/educational digitalisation, etc."

Source: draft Romanian CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Is digital innovation a key feature?

No specific information available on this aspect.

Is social innovation a key feature?

No specific information available on this aspect.

How is Smart Villages supported by the CAP?

CAP 2014-2022

Indirectly, no specific Smart Village intervention.

Through relevant Rural Development Measures in the National 2014-2020 RDP, but with no specific Smart Village interventions.

CAP 2023-2027

Indirectly, no specific Smart Villages intervention.

- **LEADER/CLLD**

'Smart Villages' is an eligible 'activity' for LEADER LAGs to include in their 2023-2027 Local Development Strategies.

National Rural Network/ CAP Network support for Smart Villages

Specific networking activities are organised on Smart Villages.

Regularly sharing news/ information: the NRN Support Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) shares relevant information via their social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter) and their newsletter. The NRN also translates relevant material into Romanian.

Specific webpage/ website: a sub-section of the NRN website is dedicated to Smart Villages.

Contact - CAP:

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania
W: https://www.madr.ro/

Contact the Network:

Reteaua Nationala de Dezvoltare Rurala (RNDR) / National Rural Development Network:
W: https://www.rndr.ro/politica-agricola-comuna/sate-inteligente.html
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 E: *nancy.samargiu@madr.ro*

How is Smart Villages supported by other policies?

Indirectly:

Given the high risk of poverty and social exclusion in the predominantly rural areas, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly included policy orientations in the 2015-2020 National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction. These are potentially relevant for the 'Smart Villages' concept, for example, increasing the role of the social economy and improving service delivery for the poor with information and communication technologies.

The possibility of a national funding programme for Smart Villages was introduced into Romanian legislation in September 2020 with the publication of Law No. 156/2020 permitting the programming of "smart village solutions" in the 2021-2027 **European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds** for Romania.

Consequently, the 'Smart Villages' concept has been embedded in the operationalisation of 2021-2027 **Cohesion Policy** by the seven Regional Development Agencies (excluding Bucharest). This includes their Smart Specialisation Strategies and specifically under 'Digital Communities for an Intelligent Region' (Axis 2). Typical interventions involve support for Smart City/Smart Village actions for public safety, public services and utilities, energy monitoring, traffic and public transport networks, street lighting, GIS systems, etc.

The 'Smart Villages' concept has begun to resonate with local communities across Romania and will do so increasingly as public sector networks, such as the Association of Romanian Communes (AcoR), actively work to disseminate and interpret the concept in the light of available funding opportunities.

It is notable that the **'Smart Cities' concept** is well-established in Romania, including the publication of a 'Smart City Guide' by the Ministry of Communications and Information Society in 2016. The 'Smart City' concept focuses strongly upon promoting public-private partnerships for the integration of IT and other technological innovations into policies/strategies for sustainable urban development and there is an increasing number of examples of this approach 'spilling over' into adjacent rural-urban communities, including in the constituted metropolitan areas with associated development strategies.

Further information:
Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly
W: http://mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/
Ministry of Communications and Information Society
W: https://www.comunicatii.gov.ro/
Centre Regional Development Agency
W: http://www.adrcentru.ro/

Where to find more information?

For **more detailed information** (including other funding sources and contacts) please visit the 'What's happening in my country' pages of the Smart Rural 21 project: https://www.smartrural21.eu/countries/romania/

For information on **smart villages and 'villages-in-transition'** in the country: https://www.smartrural27.eu/smart-communities/

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