Smart Villages Support Ireland

How is the concept of Smart Villages defined?

According to the 'Smart Villages Curriculum' commissioned by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership Company (KLP) and 20 other Local Development Companies in Ireland, the 'Smart Villages' concept is based on 12 core principles:

- **Leveraging Local Assets:** Smart Villages have a well-managed register of local assets and regularly review these assets to ensure they form part of local action plans.
- **Effective Internal Communications:** the community has an effective internal communication system to allow all local stakeholders to be regularly updated on local activities and development projects that interest them.
- **Effective External Communications:** Smart Communities have clear external communication systems to engage with other communities, regional stakeholders, and visitors to maximise opportunities for the community.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** a Smart Community is one which readily shares its experience & know-how. It is a community that actively seeks to learn from the experience of similar teams in communities locally, regionally, and internationally.
- **Digital Facilitation:** a smart community leverages the benefits of a variety of digital tools to help understand, manage, and develop local opportunities for all Smart Communities to use a framework in order to effectively and regularly capture local data and use this data to make evidence-based decisions on all aspects of local development.
- **Data & Feedback Metrics to Maximise Performance:** suitable data can be gathered through targeted stakeholder surveys, mechanical data loggers (hardware), and from public 'open data' sources e.g. Census or live register data.
- **Valuing Local Human Resources:** Smart Communities actively seek to understand and document the needs, interests and skills of local residents with the aim of supporting all local volunteers to play an active role in the development of their community. The community understands the importance of effective management and training of local volunteers, have clear onboard framework for local volunteers and have a proactive succession planning approach.

- **Collaborative Smart Community Planning:** Smart Communities recognise the essential requirement for local goal setting, idea generation, project scheduling, community reporting and overall community planning.
- **Oversight and Governance:** Smart Villages prepare, manage and implement their community plan in a collaborative, transparent and sustainable manager. Strong governance processes and structures are in place to support collaborative planning and working.
- **Community Projects Pipeline:** the community manages a pipeline of local project interventions which volunteers, sponsors & supporters can engage and participate in.
- **Consensus Management:** Smart Communities appreciate differences of opinion and implement mechanisms to ensure such difficulties do not affect the overall objectives of the community.
- **Transparent Financial Management:** Smart Communities have transparent accounting procedures and policies. They employ good financial decision making.

Is digital innovation a key feature?

Yes, digital facilitation is a component of the 12 principles of the Smart Villages definition. Additionally, numerous other principals are heavily related to digital tools to facilitate communications, data and feedback metrics to maximise performance.

Is social innovation a key feature?

Y   Yes. While social innovation is not a specified key feature of the definition, social innovation underpins the entire concept of 'Smart Villages'. Every part of the definition of 'Smart Villages' directly relates to social innovation.

How is Smart Villages supported by the CAP?

CAP 2014-2022

Direct Smart Village interventions:

LEADER/ CLLD
LEADER intervention supports Smart Villages by providing funding for Smart Village projects. LEADER has been the primary funder of Smart Village plans across Ireland. The Smart Village Manual commissioned by the Local Development Company 'Smart Village' Partnership was funded through the LEADER platform.

CAP 2023-2027

Direct Smart Village interventions:

LEADER/CLLD:
LEADER will continue to provide funding for community Smart Village planning, and Community Smart Village projects like Internet of Things (IoT) projects for Irish communities.

National Rural Network/ CAP Network support for Smart Villages

Several network activities have been implemented on Smart Villages.

- Collection and dissemination of specific examples/good practices
- Conference organised with focus on Smart Villages
- NRN newsletter with information on Smart Villages
- Smart Villages Thematic Group

The Irish NRN have also published the two editions of their annual 'Smart Villages and Rural Towns' newsletter (edition 1 and edition 2) over the course of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP) (extended to 2022). These featured 16 guest authors who bring forth their own examples of, and perspective on the smart rural movement, whilst maintaining the same foci: the creation of Smart Villages.

Contact - CAP:

Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
W: https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/

Contact the Network:

Irish National Rural Network
W: https://www.nationalruralnetwork.ie/
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How is Smart Villages supported by other policies?

Part of the Our Rural Futures project led by the department of Rural and Community Development, provides digital innovation projects across Ireland.

Further information: *https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4c236-our-rural-future-vision-and-policy-context/*

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/ireland/

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

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