

Taskforce Action Plan – Poland

Version 1 (08 12 2022)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	CONTEXT	1
2.	THE PURPOSE OF THE TASKFORCE	1
3.	LINKS TO EXISTING SMART VILLAGE EXCHANGES	2
4.	MEMBERSHIP	2
5.	PLANNED ACTIONS	2
5.1	First set of taskforce meetings	2
5.2	Other actions of the Taskforce	3
5.3	A proposal to involve Taskforce established as part of the SV27 project in the process of preparing the principles for the implementation of the concept of Smart Villages in Poland	3
5.3.1	LEADER/Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)	3
5.3.2	Rural infrastructure and implementation of Smart Villages	5

ANNEX I: LIST OF MEMBERS

ANNEX II: MEETING REPORTS

ANNEX III SCOPE OF GUIDEBOOK ON SMART VILLAGE



1. Context

Preparatory support has been implemented under the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme, transitional period. LAGs have received additional funds for granting preparation of the Smart Villages concepts prepared by interested villages. Inhabitants have had the opportunity to apply for support for the preparation of the Smart Villages (SV) concept through LAGs.

Till now there have been no SV concepts already finalised under LEADER. Taking into account the fact that the possibility was offered in July 2022, we need to wait for first results.

However, the National Strategic Plan CAP 2023-2027 continues direct support for the concept of Smart Villages. The LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) can foresee preparation of 'Smart Village' concepts in its Local Development Strategy (LDS), and the projects being part of 'Smart Village' concepts will receive extra points in calls organised by LAGs.

It is also planned to implement a pilot specific intervention aimed at supporting the implementation of projects described in the Smart Village concepts developed during the preparatory phase with or without support granted under LEADER. Selection criteria for the Smart Villages pilot projects will concern the following: impact to village development, innovation, digital solutions proposed, maturity of proposed solutions, economic aspects of the project.

The beneficiaries may be local government units, their associations or company of a local government unit, as local partners, who were involved in the creation of the concept. It is planned to finance one 'Smart Villages' concept in each voivodeship as a start.

The Smart Villages awards is a tool for identifying « smart » initiatives that allows to collect information about such initiatives that have already been implemented. At the same time, competitions are a tool to promote the concept of Smart Villages. Two competitions have already been held, in 2019 and 2021, and the third competition is currently underway, which will be settled in 2023. Three editions of the "My Smart Village" call for projects, has been jointly organised by the National Rural Network with the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

2. The purpose of the taskforce

Key policy areas of taskforce interventions (Summary)

- ✓ Smart village concepts implemented under LEADER
- ✓ The concept of Smart Villages supported by various sources

In Poland, during the transition period and in the National Strategic Plan of the CAP for 2023-2027, a framework was created to support the preparation and implementation of the concept of Smart Villages. Competitions conducted by the National Rural Network showed many initiatives that fall into this trend.

Meetings and discussions held show that there is a great demand for insights and hints regarding both the preparation and implementation of the concept. Both when Smart Village concepts are prepared as part of local development strategies of Local Action Groups financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and in the case of opportunities arising from multi-fund financing.

In Poland, in 10 regions (out of 16), Community-Led Local Development will be able to be financed, apart from the European Agricultural and Rural Development Fund, also from the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.

Taskforce purposes:

1. Help in using the opportunities created by CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027
2. Exploring the possibilities and expanding the scope of financing the Smart Villages concept from various European funds and national sources. Initiating technical assistance for interested parties

3. Links to existing Smart Village exchanges

Smart Villages initiatives are supported by the National Rural Network, through projects implemented by IRWiR PAN. The Smart Rural 21 and Smart Rural 27 experiences will be used.

4. Membership

All group members are carefully selected for their experience and role at different institutional levels.

During the first meetings, the composition can be modified. See Annex I.

5. Planned actions

5.1 First set of taskforce meetings

Around **three meetings are expected yearly** from early 2023 until end of 2023. National experts would contribute to the organisation and coordination of these meetings, including inviting potential ‘external’ contributors and preparing background material if needed (in prior agreement with the SR27 Core Team). Ideally, meetings will be linked to some key Smart Villages policy milestones – also adjusted to the timing of key policy developments (e.g. in preparation for a public call text on Smart Villages).

The exchanges can allocate funding for the logistics (e.g. room, catering, participants travel, etc. – up to the available budget and depending on the number of taskforces/ number of members etc.). **This is to be agreed later with the SR27 Core Team.**

There are some common themes/ goals – contribution to European level work - that we’d like the taskforces to focus on (in a cross-cutting way), these could be integrated within the upcoming meetings, namely:

- ✓ **Identification of villages** for the geomapping tool: the taskforce members can be asked if they can suggest villages for the geomapping tool or express their views on the ones already included. Synergies with other activities (e.g. NRN Smart Villages competition) could be created.
- ✓ **CAP & other policy analysis:** It would be important to validate the findings of the SV factsheets with relevant members. Also explore if there are other policy tools/ interventions that could be added (e.g. from Cohesion Policy).
- ✓ **Identifying common themes of interest** at the European level: Common themes of interest – e.g. relevant for specific stakeholder groups (e.g. LEADER LAGs) or specific themes (e.g. energy, climate action, etc.) – could be proposed for exchange at the European level.

Planned timing	Focus of meeting and/or main outcomes (agreed next steps)
March 2023	Introduction to the subject and agreeing on the outline of the work and composition of the group
April 2023	A working meeting with an analysis of the state of preparations for the implementation of SV in Poland.



June 2023	Assessing progress and extending support from other programmes and funds
November 2023	A working meeting with an analysis of the state of preparations for the implementation of SV in Poland.

5.2 Other actions of the Taskforce

Taskforce will be also involved in preparation of the guidebook on Smart Village preparation and implementation. The initial plan is to engage one or two members of the Taskforce and some experts outside to elaborate the guidebook. The potential content of the document is attached. It should be useful for:

1. LAGs- to support the planning and implementation of SV under LDS
2. Local communities – to give the basic information and some good practices, suggestions of preparation of the concept, recommendations on participatory methods
3. Managing authorities – to give recommendation of SV assessment which could be taken into account while drafting the rules.

The role of Taskforce will be to give the recommendations and feedback on the drafted Guidebook.

5.3 A proposal to involve Taskforce established as part of the SV27 project in the process of preparing the principles for the implementation of the concept of Smart Villages in Poland

Direct financing of projects related to smart villages is provided for in two interventions described in the Strategic Plan for the CAP for 2023-2027.

It is proposed that the members of Taskforce prepare a guidebook containing recommendations for the preparation and implementation of the concept of Smart Villages in Poland.

The preparation of the guidebook can be financed under the SV27 project.

The idea is to have some recommendations, tips and hints such as: how to work on SV concept, what participatory methods are the most suitable, how to present the SWOT analysis in a comprehensive way. In addition, the guidebook could give some advice how to tackle with both on digital aspects of smart village and environment and climate issues, cause these are the themes explicitly mentioned in CAP Strategic Plan for Poland. If managing authority agrees the guidebook could also give some recommendations for experts concerning assessment of SV projects under pilot intervention in CAP Strategic Plan.

5.3.1 LEADER/Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)

1. **As an element supporting innovation:** "An additional instrument for inducing innovation is the implementation of smart rural concepts, which by their nature are oriented towards both innovative solutions, as well as in the field of technology and digitization."
2. The development of the concept of smart villages is a separate objective of the intervention (5). As far as the scope is concerned, the area envisaged to be covered

by the concept – it must fall within the other, generally defined, objectives of the intervention:

- I. **Development of entrepreneurship, including the development of the bioeconomy or green economy, in particular:**
 - a) starting non-agricultural business activity by natural persons
 - b) development of non-agricultural economic activity
 - c) developing social enterprises
- II. **Development of non-agricultural functions of agricultural holdings, in particular, in the field of:**
 - a) agritourism farms
 - b) educational pens
 - c) care farms,
- III. **Developing cooperation in short food chains**
- IV. **Improving access to services for local communities, excluding productive investments and operations under points 1 to 2**
- V. **Preparing the concept of a Smart Village**
- VI. **Improvement of access to small public infrastructure**
- VII. **Raising awareness of the importance of sustainable agriculture, agri-food economy, green economy, bioeconomy and protection of cultural and natural heritage of the Polish countryside, as well as strengthening the education programs of leaders of public and social life.**
- VIII. **Social inclusion of disadvantaged people.**

The following operations are excluded from the aid:

- ✓ including the construction or modernization of roads, markets, water and sewage networks, household sewage treatment plants,
 - ✓ concerning the provision of services to agriculture.
3. Support for the preparation and implementation of Smart Villages can be included in the LDS.
 4. Grant projects in the field of preparing the concept of Smart Villages

As part of initiating and promoting Smart Villages, support for the preparation of the concept is foreseen. Each concept can count on PLN 4000. in the form of a lump sum.

The decision to offer support is the exclusive competence of the LAG and must be reflected in the LDS submitted in the context of the LDS selection competition.

Similar support has already been provided under LEADER in the 2014-2020 RDP. Over 100 LAGs have expressed initial interest, at the moment there are no effects in the form of prepared concepts – the possibility of submitting grant projects was made available only in summer 2022 (then the regulation of the Minister of Agriculture introducing such a possibility was published).

If the LAG decides to support the preparation of the Smart Village concept, this support will be provided in the form of grant projects. The procedure for selecting grantees to prepare the Smart Village concept may differ from the procedure for selecting grantees under other grant projects. Support for a grant project is granted provided that the LAG ensures the appropriate quality of the concepts financed under the grant project.



The Strategic Plan for the CAP 2023-2027 indicates:

- Taking into account the use of digital and telecommunications technologies or better use of knowledge,
- Demonstrating the benefits for the local community, m.in. in terms of improved quality of life, improved quality of local services or safety, respect for the environment and climate, problems related to underinvestment, ageing population, depopulation, insufficient jobs, digital divide.

The concept includes in particular:

- a) description of the concept development process, including conducting a consultation area with the community on the results of the partnership's work,
- b) simplified SWOT analysis of the area covered by this concept,
- c) a plan to involve the community in the subsequent possible implementation of this concept, taking into account the role of the village head or village council in this process,
- d) a list of projects that will make up the implementation of this concept, taking into account a digital or environmental or climate component.

5. Smart projects can be implemented under intervention 13.1. LAGs may reward such projects through standard calls for proposals or organise dedicated competitions. The support will take the form of a grant in the form of reimbursement of eligible costs up to PLN 500,000.

5.3.2 Rural infrastructure and implementation of Smart Villages

1. In the Strategic Plan for the CAP for 2023-2027, a separate area is dedicated to supporting smart village projects (Area B Smart Village).

"As part of this area, it is planned to implement selected elements of the smart villages concept, including infrastructure investments, which in a bottom-up, comprehensive and innovative way will allow to solve a specific and important problem occurring in a given area, and relating, for example, to improving the quality of life of the population, reducing unfavorable demographic trends, improving the quality of public services, respect for the natural environment, increasing employment and digital inclusion. In particular, it is planned to support activities responding to the diagnosed needs of local communities and engaging their local resources. "

2. Aid may be granted if:
 - the Smart Villages concept is consistent with that defined in the LEADER/Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) intervention
 - contains elements for which the investor may be a municipality or an inter-municipal association
3. The amount of aid granted for the implementation of operations in area B Smart village may not exceed PLN 10 million, and the aid is granted for an operation with a planned amount of costs eligible for support exceeding PLN 1.5 million.

4. Selection criteria

It is assumed that about 16 projects will be financed, so it is a pilot support.



The plan indicates that preference will be given in particular to investments in modern infrastructure, including infrastructure for adaptation to climate change and environmental protection (e.g. through the construction of renewable energy installations, retention reservoirs to collect rainwater and meltwater, and passive construction).

The selection criteria shall concern in particular:

- the impact of the implemented project on the development of the locality,
- applications of digital components,
- determine the further functioning of the project, including additional sources of funding.
- comprehensiveness and maturity of the proposed solutions,
- Innovation
- indication of the economic dimension of the project.



Annex I: List of members

Membership of the Taskforce

Name of member	Name of organisation of member	Type of organisation (policy, village, research, NGO, private...)	Short description of role of organisation in the taskforce (reason why member was included)	Member on GROOP?	Participated in 1 st meeting?	Participated in 2 nd meeting?
Paweł Krzeczunowicz	National Rural Network	Gov	Director; Extensive knowledge in the field of rural development and smart villages			
Ryszard Kamiński	Kuyavian-Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Centre	Gov	Director; Extensive knowledge in the field of rural development and smart villages			
Piotr Sadłocha	Polish LAG Network	Non-gov	President of the Board; The important role of LEADER in implementing the SV concept			
Dorota Goetz	LAG	Non-gov	President of the Board; The important role of LEADER in implementing the SV concept			
Łukasz Komorowski	Institute of Rural Development and Agriculture of the Polish Academy of Sciences	Science	SV concept researcher			
Piotr Ostaszewski	Ostoja Natury	Priv	President; winner of the SV competition, participation in the Smart Rural 21 project			
Antoni Konopka	Marshal's Office of the Opolskie Voivodeship	Regional authority				
Ewa Malik Kapler	Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy	Gov	Head of the Department of Regional Policy. Searching for and supporting SV financing opportunities from other European funds			
Łukasz Tomczak	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Gov	Director of CAP Department; Supervising SV implementation under National Strategic Plan			
Beata Rodak	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Gov	Head of LEADER unit			



Marlena Kończak	Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy	Gov	Director of the European Social Fund Implementation Department; social; recognizing and expanding the possibilities of supporting SV by the ESF			
Arkadiusz Ptak	Town and Commune of Pleszew	Territorial self-government	Mayor of Pleszew; Smart villages from the perspective of municipalities			
Andrzej Halasiewicz	RURBAN	Priv	SV Expert			
Joanna Gierulska			SV Expert			



Annex II: Meeting Reports

1st Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting – [Name of Country]

Purpose of the meeting

Date of the meeting

[DD/MM/YYYY – DD/MM/YYYY]

Location

Participation

[Please specify how many participants, the organisations that participated and their role]

Main outcomes & lessons learnt (including deviations from initial plan)

What were the main outcomes/ results of this meeting in the light of the objectives of the taskforce?

What are the main findings/ lessons?

Any deviations from what you initially planned (e.g. lower commitment / fewer participants)? Please explain why.

Next steps

[What will be the follow-up actions, next steps? When is the next meeting planned? What is planned in between the two meetings, e.g. research, etc.]

Supporting documents

[Please provide any agenda, presentations, videos/ recordings, training material as separate files – if applicable]

The event in pictures

Please paste some images here if possible (and send them as separate files if possible).

Annex III Scope of guidebook on Smart Village

The guidebook is intended to support the LAG and the Ministry of Agriculture in the preparation of the principles for the implementation of the concept of Smart Villages in Poland. If the recommendations are considered justified, they may be reflected in the legislation or guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The aim of the guidebook is to constitute a set of recommendations regarding:

1. Introducing of Smart Villages in the LDS

How to describe Smart Villages in the LDS, taking into account the structure of the LDS proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

How to prepare good implementation structure of grant projects financing Smart Village preparation grants – how to assure the appropriate quality of the financed concept. What evaluation criteria should the LAG adopt? What should be the eligibility conditions?

2. Content of the concept of Smart Villages – development of the requirements indicated in the Strategic Plan, recommendations for the preparation of the concept

The concept includes in particular:

- a) description of the concept development process, including conducting a consultation area with the community on the results of the partnership's work,
Recommendations on methods of developing concepts, including participatory ones, meeting scenarios, sheets for developing results
- b) simplified SWOT analysis of the area covered by this concept,
What should the simplification of SWOT consist of, what can be dispensed with, what can be emphasized, how to present the results? How to link the SWOT concept to the needs in the LDS?
- c) a plan to involve the community in the subsequent possible implementation of this concept, taking into account the role of the village head or village council in this process,
How to implement projects resulting from the concept in partnership? How to include public and private entities? What is their role – project implementer or consultative and advisory function? How to monitor the implementation of the concept? How to coordinate the implementation process, taking into account the different sources of financing and the time in which they are available?
- d) a list of projects that will make up the implementation of this concept, taking into account a digital or environmental or climate component.
Recommendations as to the content of the list, what elements necessary to include at the concept stage.



3. Standards, basic conditions for the concept of Smart Villages, regardless of the source of funding

Defining the basic elements necessary to be included in the concept of Smart Villages, regardless of whether their preparation was financed by LEADER

4. Recommendations on calls for proposals for the selection of projects resulting from the concept of Smart Villages under intervention 13.1 and in particular 10.10

Suggestions on organisation, description of eligibility conditions (access) and selection criteria

5. Recommended literature