Smart Villages Support Austria

How is the concept of Smart Villages defined?

Austria adopted the EU definition of Smart Villages in the national context:

"Smart Villages are communities in rural areas that develop intelligent solutions to challenges in their local context. They build on the existing local strengths and opportunities to initiate a process of sustainable development in their territory. They rely on a participatory approach to develop and implement strategies to improve their economic, social and environmental conditions, in particular by promoting innovation and mobilising the solutions offered by digital technologies.
Smart Villages benefit from collaboration and alliances with other communities and actors in rural and urban areas. The initiation and implementation of Smart Village strategies can build on existing initiatives (especially LEADER) and be financed from a variety of public and private sources."

Source: BMLRT, Fact sheet Smart Villages , BMLRT / Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Regions and Tourism

Is digital innovation a key feature?

Digital is a key aspect of the definition. Digital transformation is seen as tool not an end in itself. Especially, within LEADER digital technologies will play a role in the implementation of Smart Village.

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 Villages intervention:
- LEADER/ CLLD

CAP 2023-2027

Yes, direct Smart Villages interventions are planned:

LEADER/CLLD: The Local Action Groups (LAGs) can integrate the Smart Village concept and implement this preferably through umbrella projects (integrated processing of local challenges through new and innovative solutions, new technologies in digitalisation). Labelling of Smart Village projects is necessary. Thematically, all 4 areas of action in the LDS are addressed. New components in LEADER: The integration of cities with up to 70,000 inhabitants; mandatory gender quota in selection committee for topics such as "Smart Villages", Local Agenda 21 and village renewal, the "Green Deal"

The **intervention for strengthening the centres of municipalities** aims at creating new solutions for vacant buildings in town/village centres, addressing declining population and mobility issues.

Smart villages could be supported through **Rural Innovation Systems, following the EIP-AGRI's multi-actor approach**. In this context, regional micro and small businesses should be linked to enhance value chains and circular economy.

See further information on the factsheet on Smart Villages.

National Rural Network/ CAP Network support for Smart Villages

Specific networking activities are organised on Smart Villages:
- Several meetings/ conferences: NRN organised several events to communicate and discuss the Smart Villages concept and present pilot projects.

Contact - CAP:

Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Regions and Tourism
W: https://www.bmlrt.gv.at/
Julian Gschnell, Desk officer
E: Julian.gschnell@bmlrt.gv.at

Contact the Network:

Netzwerk Zukunftsraum Land
W: https://www.zukunftsraumland.at/
Michael Fischer, Team member
E: Michael.fischer@zukunftsraumland.at

How is Smart Villages supported by other policies?

EU – Interreg: In the 2014-2020 period, Alpine Space programme supported the setting up of smart region projects (Austrian Partner Tyrol/Pitztal).

The "SmartVillages" Interreg Alpine Space project aims to prepare cities and municipalities in rural areas to recognise the opportunities of digitisation and to use them to their advantage.

Further information: https://www.oerok.gv.at/
https://www.standort-tirol.at/page.cfm?vpath=cluster/internationale-projekte/smart-villages
Contact person: Martina Bach
Email: bach@oerok.gv.at

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/austria/

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

Last updated: 30/09/22