



Annex II: Meeting Reports

3rd Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting – AUSTRIA

Purpose of the meeting

Interim report on the different taskforce activities (especially feeding back developments in Styria to the whole taskforce) and planning further steps.

Date of the meeting

[03/10/2023]

Location

Online

Participation

6 members participated from the following organisations: federal ministry of agriculture, forestry, regions and water management, administration of Styria, LEADER LAG/ AT LEADER association. Additionally: Edina Ocsko and Anita Balogh (SR27 project)

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

- **LEADER LDS analysis:** After the pilot analysis of 16 Styrian LEADER local development strategies, the national expert conducted the analysis on how the other 67 LEADER LAGs dealt with Smart Villages in their LDS. Michael Fischer gave an overview of the outcomes of this analysis ([the analysis is available via SR27 website in English language](#)). The following discussion circulated mainly around smart village strategies (especially in the context of the R40 indicator). It was clear for all participants, that Smart Villages initiatives need a strategic basis, but that the LDS as such might be an adequate substitute (especially when Smart Villages are implemented as inter-municipal cooperation on a larger scale). During the discussion it became also clear, that additional support could help unveil the potential of digitalisation.
- **Digitalisation:** during the 2nd taskforce meeting the members asked to discuss opportunities of digitalisation for smart village development during the 3rd meeting. To get the EU perspective on that topic, Edina Ocsko and Anita Balogh provided insight into the Smart Village Observatory and especially on the digitalisation cluster. The following discussion was very fruitful, especially the experience, that working on digitalisation needs a thorough assessment if digitalisation as such can add value to a certain need. Subsequently, Michael Fischer presented a synthesis of an Austrian study that systematized future potential of digitalisation for the municipal level. The federal ministry of agriculture and forestry, regions and water management provided a first insight into their planned smart village challenge. This will be primary subject of the 4th taskforce meeting.
- **Translating the EU definition for Smart Villages to the AT context and define quality criteria:** Michael Fischer provided a short summary, how the intended attempt defining “quality criteria” for SV finally turned into a system of “development corridors” during the work with the Styrian pilot federal state.
- **Clarify the roles within a governance and implementation system and sharpen support mechanisms (especially on federal state and regional level)** Styrian representatives gave a short insight into the LEADER and Regionalmanagement workshop, that took place in May 2023 ([a summary of the findings is already available via the SR27 website](#)). Styria has a strong emphasis on village center development that needs dense cooperation between the different



regional development organisations and the federal administration. To support this, the federal administration already organized follow-up initiatives in different regions to strengthen cooperation and “custom-fit” the smart village approach to different regional contexts.

Next steps

The 4th taskforce meeting will take place on Dec. 11th 09.00 – 12.00 online.

Supporting documents

The event in pictures

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