



## 1<sup>st</sup> Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting – [CYPRUS]

### Purpose of the meeting

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the National Taskforce aimed to:

1. Bring together all the relevant stakeholders,
2. Receive their engagement for supporting the Smart Villages philosophy,
3. Mobilise stakeholders with capacity, ability and interest in shaping future Smart Villages policies,
4. Define the role of the Taskforce.

### Date of the meeting

19/01/2022

### Location

Conference Room of Agricultural Research Institute, Nicosia

### Participation

The 1<sup>st</sup> National Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting had 17 participants, including the National Expert.

The membership of the Taskforce includes representatives that are stakeholders connected to:

- (a) policy planning, mostly the representatives from Ministries,
- (b) local authorities, including representatives from LAGs
- (c) farmers
- (d) research and innovation and
- (e) networks, like the national NRN.

Policymakers are directly involved in the formal management of policies, including policy / programme development, implementation and evaluation. This group includes stakeholders such as the Managing Authority of the RDP, the NRN, intermediary bodies responsible for managing specific programmes, etc.

Policy practitioners include organisations that might have an important point of view and know-how, interest and possibly direct influence on how relevant policies are being shaped. This category of stakeholders includes stakeholders such as the Communities Association, a Rural Municipality, LEADER Associations, agricultural umbrella organisations, organisations contributing to digital strategies, key environmental organisations, etc.

Other knowledgeable organisations are specialists that might have an interest and good knowledge on Smart Villages development, including researchers, specialist NGOs, etc.

Local community representatives include representatives of local communities.

Further analysis of the role of each organisation / participant is included in Annex I.

During the meeting the representatives of the Deputy Ministry of Research and the Ministry of Agriculture, as policy makers, indicated that they fully support the promotion of the Smart Villages approach.

The representative of the Deputy Ministry of Research presented the CY Smart City Platform, designed by the Deputy Ministry, which will be able to adopt elements and data from

applications already created or planned. It excludes no one. As mentioned, the goal of the Deputy Ministry is to promote the Strategy for Smart Cyprus.

Stakeholders that participate in the Taskforce and have an important interface with the primary sector (PEK, ARI, NRN) made important reports regarding the specificity of Cyprus and the need to be a prerequisite for the implementation of smart agriculture solutions, in an area that wants to be characterized as a Smart Village / Smart Rural Area.

Reports from specialists – members of the Taskforce – indicate that smart applications and solutions have already been implemented in Cypriot cities. There is know-how, equipment and experience, nationally, that should be exploited.

A general finding is the fact that the availability of resources (funding resources) is limited.

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

The main policymakers concerning the Smart Villages support and promotion in Cyprus, the Deputy Ministry of Innovation and the Ministry of Agricultural, fully support the need for developing and implementing Smart Villages Strategies.

The Deputy Ministry of Innovation is designing the Cyprus Smart Cities Platform and it is preparing the Strategy for Smart Cyprus. Both tools and projects could include rural areas as well and initiatives / smart solutions that satisfy the needs of rural communities.

Members of the Taskforce, from different organisations, mentioned the peculiarity of Cyprus as an island, with 37% of its land occupied by Turkish troops, expressing the importance of supporting the development of agriculture and farming in rural areas. Smart Agriculture / Farming could be a smart solution for having better results in agro-economy and it could also attract young farmers and families to rural areas. Smart Solutions in Agricultural / Farming should be a basic / necessary activity in any Smart Village Strategy in Cyprus.

It was also mentioned that there is expertise, know-how and technologies in Cyprus, as many Municipalities have already developed and now implement Smart Cities Strategies. Rural Areas should take advantage of the existing expertise, having in mind that resources, especially funding resources, are limited.

Two main gaps that were noticed and the members of the Taskforce asked the National Expert to cover them were:

1. Having a national definition for smart villages or smart rural areas, to fit better to Cyprus needs and stakeholders understanding.
2. Having the priorities of rural areas in smart solutions. The Deputy Ministry of Innovation was running an exercise for Cities, to set the Cities' priorities for smart solutions, like smart parking and smart lighting.

Even more, the participants had a great interest about the subjects discussed during the meeting. They also had the opportunity to express their commitment at the Taskforce tasks.

### Next steps

The next "official" meeting is planned for the end of the year. In the meantime, meetings and tele-meetings will be organised connected to the tasks and the needs that the Taskforce and the Project is facing.

Consultation meetings are expected to take place for finalising the national definition for Smart Villages and for prioritising the needs of the rural communities on smart solutions. Policymakers are expected to give important feedback concerning the Smart Villages approach and how it will be promoted at national level. It will also be important to ensure the cooperation of the Union of Cyprus Communities, as the stakeholder that represents rural areas.

The next steps include the following:

1. Finalising a national definition for Smart Villages / Rural Areas



2. Prioritising the needs of the Rural Communities on Smart Solutions (research to the ground)
3. Having a Ministry as the Formal Owner of the Smart Villages initiative
4. Organising consultation and promotional meetings at the villages / areas that are interested about SV approach
5. Identifying and promoting SV practices and examples in national level
6. Promoting developed procedures and funding schemes to approach the SV philosophy

#### Supporting documents

1. Agenda
2. Presentation, Mr. Makis Papamichael, National Expert SR27 Project
3. Presentation, Mrs Eleni Poulli, Officer, Dep. Ministry of Innovation
4. Participation List (list & signatures)
5. Pictures

The event in pictures



