

3rd Smart Villages Taskforce Meeting – [Finland]

Purpose of the meeting

Planning the Taskforce activities, reporting on activities, ESF.

Date of the meeting

[02/03/2023]

Location

On-line, Zoom

Participation

The third meeting was held 2.3.2023. Nine people from the Taskforce and as guests the manager of the Finnish Village Movement Aleksi Koivisto and speaker Kati Torniainen from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Structural Funds ESF, ERDF) participated in the meeting.

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

The Task Force received short presentations on the CAP-analysis situation, a brief report on programs and financing in a smart village context, and Kati Torniainen from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment made a presentation on ESF (partly ERDF) in the context of citizens and small actors. Linked documents are presented below (in Finnish). Discussions were held on the Taskforce plan and future steps. One of the main topics was arranging a webinar on digital and villages. Finally, the Guidebook on Smart Villages in Finnish was presented and requested to be disseminated to Finnish LAGs and Regional Village NGOs (completed).

Below are some main findings from the presentations and work done in the SR27:

- **CAP-Analysis:** Finland has its own section in the CAP for Smart villages. LEADER does not directly mention Smart Villages, but LAGs work with the thematic. Smart Village-type actions can also be financed in COOP interventions (e.g., climate, social) of investments of public interest.
- **Structural Funds:** Citizen actor-oriented projects are meant to increase the possibilities of various project actors to participate in the implementation of the ESR+ program and promote cooperation between small projects. Inclusive participation is a cross-cutting theme of the entire program. One of the focus points is partnership, cooperation, and know-how between professionals, the third and fourth sectors, and the authorities to improve the services of the most disadvantaged groups and their attachment to society. Grants of €50,000 can be awarded based on an application to projects promoting inclusion and community, which include not only the planning of

an operational model that promotes social inclusion but also the testing and/or piloting of the implemented operational model.

- **Report on programs and financing:**

Findings:

- Programme level synergies are often mentioned, but in practice, is lagging behind? Sectoral thinking is still alive, even though intersectoral work is done within the government and ministries.
- Rural/villages/communities were not very present in any of the checked programs. The keyword "local" seems to be much more present at a general level.
- NGOs, citizens were mentioned more often as target groups (capacity building) or potential partners in projects. NGOs are mentioned as potential applicants, but often in reality, they do not have enough financial capacities or resources.
- Innovations, smart, piloting were strongly present in most of the programs, with the local level being quite often mentioned as the place for experimentation, piloting, or being the subject of capacity-building measures.
- Forward-looking partnerships and cooperation are well present in the programs.
- Overall, there seems to be forward-looking processes, remains to be seen how policy and funding flows will reach local actors and economy.

Suggestions and conclusions - considering place-based/village development through program and funding tools:

- Mainstream place-based/village development in EU/national LEADER programs as a compulsory/highly recommended part for member states. Flexibility should be given as to the content. Look for possibilities to add funding.
- Better include local participation and funding in the existing and upcoming programs/funding means by earmarking.
- Finding policy solutions and funding for smart villages (e.g., "Smart place program or subprogram") through innovation partnerships tools (ref. EIP) or local consortium tools (Ref. Horizon, ERASMUS KA2) at a smaller scale. These could be built within LEADER, but as LEADER does not cover all of Europe, nor do all LEADER strategies cover smart villages well, other solutions could be thought of. These tools should be flexible, allowing cross-sectoral innovation and processes profiting local economy, sustainable development, and wellbeing.
- Finding agreement and simple tools to better allow cross-sectoral projects (ref. CLLD). The model of lead program is still valid, but as sectors do not agree, things do not progress. If a specific local development program was built together with different sectoral actors (DGs at European level), the CLLD-element might be more easily reached with inbuilt mechanisms. The program would cover all EU and broader Europe. It could have defined thematic subprograms (rural, urban, climate, social...) and a cross-cutting subprogram including the abovementioned partnership and consortium projects. LEADER would be included in the rural thematic. Each thematic area would have earmarked funding for this purpose. Remains difficulties of defining

local (as it is to define rural through typologies) and how this local development program would relate to other programs and mechanisms.

- Simplified tools within the different programs (e.g., lump sum model for piloting in the ESF program). Build in the different programs sections or subprograms on smart local/place-based development.

Next steps

Organising of a webinar on Digital Transition

During Autumn 2023 a Taskforce meeting will be organised on-line.

Supporting documents

Petri Rinne presented a few results of the CAP-analysis made within SR27. The document is going to be finalized at a later stage of the SR 27 project. Kim Smedslund made a short key-word analysis on national programmes and funding: [SR27 – OneDrive \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Kati Tornainen made a presentation on ERDF and ESF https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1T6iEIBLubaEkZRlyHlI6JJcbaAs-QIb5/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=108812940506410239187&rtpof=true&sd=true



