



Smart Rural Taskforce Final webinar – [Finland]

Purpose of the webinar

State of play and conclusions of the Finnish Smart Village Taskforce

Date of the meeting

[11/03/2024]

Location

On-line, Zoom

Participation

The event was co-organised by the SR27 Taskforce and the NSU. All Leader groups and Regional Village NGO's received an invitation. Over 60 people registered and 46 people were on-line.

In the concluding webinar, SR27 results at European level and Finland were presented. Future policies, programmes and funding around Smart Villages and local rural development were tackled by the panelists and the participants.

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

- 1. State of play, Edina Ocsko:** Edina Ocsko SR27 project coordinator presented the project and its achievements. The analyses made on CAP "Smart Villages" and Green Deal, as well as on alternative financing options are paving the way towards a Smart village policy and contributing to the Rural Pact process. Other activities in SR27 were running the Taskforces supporting the creation of the Observatory, exchange/ sharing knowledge activities and working with the energy and digitalization clusters. Finally, policy recommendations are prepared to better include "Smart Villages" in future programmes.
- 2. Case-studies**

Älvbyarna:

Älvbyarna went through a co-creation process involving different stakeholders like the municipality, development companies and researchers. Also study visits were organized and results disseminated. As concrete results:

- A guide for business models for small scale energy production run by associations
- Online calculation tool for sustainable energy systems for buildings • <https://heatingtool->



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Raudanmaa Lighthouse example:

A long-term Smart Village strategy supported by a business plan was prepared after closing of the school and a multipurpose Community hall was created. A cooperative supports the daily work. The hall and all supportive activities (eg. small animal farm) constitutes now the heart of the community.

3. The Finnish Taskforce process and results (Kim Smedslund)

The national expert presented the process from planning to webinars and surveys to reports as described above. The main report results (TF meeting 5) led to three panelist interventions on the state of play and thoughts on future.

Marianne Selkäinaho, Ministry of Agriculture:

Ms. Selkäinaho presented Smart Villages in the Finnish CAP-strategy with the possibility to start with a planning phase. Cooperation and innovation are key words. Several examples illustrated what a Smart Village project could be in practice.

To support Smart villages the Rural Network and NSU organizes regular Morning Coffee's and animates a discussion group:

[Home – Älykkäät kylät – älykkäämpi maaseutu | Smarta byar – smartare landsbygd – Maaseutuverkosto](#)

Petri Rinne, LAG Joutsenten Reitti – Our Common Future project

Mr. Rinne told about the study on countries outside EU on LEADER challenges and possibilities. The recommendations included eg. capacity building measures and ensuring right balance between innovation and bureaucracy. Some lessons could be drawn also to EU future programming. Below some quotes from the study:

“Pay attention to innovation in animation activities to raise awareness and support local, encourage LAGs as potential hubs of social innovation.”

“In Europe we are very reactive, and we should be more proactive”

“Support of the LEADER family and funds for cooperation projects is crucial for the LAGs from non-EU countries”

“We should pay higher attention to the accessibility of the future LEADER and avoid the rural population divide between those who can and those who cannot.”

Timo Ollila, Etelä-Savo Center for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment: Structural funds today and tomorrow in Smart villages.

Bottom-up development work supports inclusion and participation. Different cost models allow the diversity as to projects and applicants. Also smaller actors have

options. Mr. Ollila reminded about the possibility of interaction between applicants and financiers to create need-based calls.

Next steps

The Taskforce will continue the work in 2024 coordinating the activities and actions with the National Network Unit.

Supporting documents

Programme and documents (some in english) presented at the webinar:

[Smart Rural 27: Suomen päätöswebinaari - Maaseutuverkosto](#)



