



Smart Villages in CAP Strategic plan Cyprus

Factsheet

The Smart Rural 27 project (2nd Preparatory Action on Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century, 2021-24) aims at improving the Smart Villages support framework at both the local (rural communities) and regional/ national (policymaking) contexts.



Smart Villages in the CAP Strategic plan Cyprus

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

What are the basic SV components?



DEFINITION OF SMART VILLAGES

“Smart Rural Areas’ are Collaborating Rural Areas that design and implement Smart Local Strategies based on the participatory approach in order to promote their attractiveness as living and working areas. Smart solution interventions, including smart agriculture interventions, are implemented, stemming from the needs of the local community and utilizing, where possible, digital technologies, to improve their resilience and so that sustainable development, social cohesion and environmental optimization become characteristics of these areas.” (CY CAP SP, p.718).

Is there a focus on digital innovation? There is a relatively weak focus on digital technologies. National definition is adopting digital technologies where possible and according to the CAP SP of Cyprus. It is expected to promote innovation in agriculture and rural areas, encouraging their digital development by interested stakeholders and farmers.

Is rural area/village defined? Rural areas are defined by the Department of Town Planning and Housing of the Ministry of Interior. According to this definition, *“rural areas are considered the whole of the territory of the island, excluding the areas covered by the Cities Local Plans (Nicosia LP, Pafos LP, Larnaka LP and Limassol LP)”* (CY CAP SP, p.535).

Is there a reference to smart village strategies? The national definition for SV includes a reference highlighting the need for Smart Rural Areas to be collaborating rural areas that design and implement Smart Local Strategies based on the participatory approach, in order to promote their attractiveness as living and working areas.

Smart Villages in the CAP Strategic plan - Cyprus



Dedicated Smart Villages interventions

There is no dedicated Smart Villages intervention in the CAP Strategic Plan.

Other relevant interventions

LEADER (6.1, COOP)

Mostly contributes to...

SO8: Promoting employment, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusions and local development in rural areas.



R.40: SV strategies - Target

R40 is not programmed.



Other relevant programmes:

- **“Smart City Platform” Project (Recovery and Resilience Fund) :** Collection and analysis of smart solutions data and implementation of specific solutions.

SMART VILLAGES IN THE CAP STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic statement

There is no specific reference to Smart Villages in this section of the CAP SP.

Assessments of needs and intervention strategy

There is clear reference in the Needs Assessment of the CAP SP to Smart Villages, referring to the “[a]pplication of smart village technologies especially in large rural communities” (CY CAP SP, p.42&45), and “[c]ombating digital illiteracy in rural areas and expanding digital services” (CY CAP SP, p.44), developing “synergies with the Deputy Ministry of Innovation Research and Digital Policy on widening broadband coverage, training and education in the fight against digital illiteracy. The LAGs will provide training programmes to this and they will also contribute to the development of the strategy of smart rural areas” (CY CAP SP, p.44).

Specific Objectives

SO8: Promote employment, growth, gender equality, including the participation of women in farming, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including the circular bio-economy and sustainable forestry

Under the SO8 there is a reference at the table of identification of needs, referring to: *“Application of smart village technologies especially in large rural communities, having a Grade C for prioritisation at the level of the CAP Strategic Plan, which is partially addressed in CAP Strategic Plan”* (CY CAP SP, p.98).

Target plans

R40 is not programmed in the CAP SP.

Consistency of the Strategy and complementarities

There is no specific reference to Smart Villages in this section of the CAP SP.

Elements common to several interventions ...including the CAP Network

No specific CAP Network support actions for Smart Villages have been identified in the CAP SP.

Smart Villages interventions

DEDICATED INTERVENTION

There is no dedicated Smart Villages intervention in the CAP SP.

OTHER RELEVANT INTERVENTIONS

LEADER (6.1, COOP)

LEADER is the only available tool with direct relevance to Smart Villages approach. However, there is no actual obligation for including the approach in the Local Development Strategies (LDSs). LDSs of LAGs can include actions that will help the integrated development of rural areas and will be linked to the achievement of a crucial objective of retaining the rural population and those employed in the agricultural sector by creating/maintaining jobs. It is stated that *“through their Strategies, LAGs will focus primarily on adapting local rural economies to the new economic realities of recent years, while helping to mitigate/prevent social exclusion phenomena by activating local potential and preserving/protecting the natural environment. **Cooperation actions, with particular emphasis on cooperation actions contributing to the promotion of the circular economy, smart villages and local markets, may be supported through the LEADER intervention**”* (CY CAP SP, p.586).

Modernisation: AKIS and digitalisation

There are clear and specific references in the section “Modernisation: AKIS and Digitalisation” of the CAP SP to Smart Villages, connecting the approach with the activities of the “Smart Rural 27” Project (2nd Preparatory Action for Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century).

It is stated that the *“importance of promoting the Smart village strategy, which aims to improve the quality of life of people living in rural areas and finally to **make use of new technologies in order to simplify the procedures for implementing, monitoring and controlling the CAP and reducing bureaucracy**”* (CY CAP SP, p.718).

Concerning the connection with the SR27 project, this section refers to the fact that: *“Specifically for the Smart Rural Areas initiative and strategy, there is full understanding and communication with the project promoter, which is carrying out a specific study under the project contract for the ‘2nd Preparatory Action for Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century ‘Smart Rural 27’ Project – SR27’, funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture. The action has begun setting up a working group with the cooperation of the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy and supporting the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment and its aim is to provide recommendations and proposals for the development of smart rural areas.*

The Working Group has so far made a specific recommendation on the methodology for designating areas as ‘Smart Rural Areas’, which is directly linked to the proposed definition of ‘Smart Rural Areas’.

The proposed designation methodology includes the following:

In order for a rural area to be classified as 'smart', the criteria falling within the framework of:

(A) the definition of 'Smart Rural Areas' as described; and

(B) 'smart solutions' sub-interventions, designing and implementing at least four (4) 'smart solutions', in addition to 'Intelligent / Smart Agriculture'.

The study "Inventory of the Priorities of Rural Areas in the Design and Implementation of Smart Solutions" is currently ongoing. The field survey shall be carried out in cooperation with the Union of the Communities of Cyprus. The results will be shared and presented at the next meeting of the Working Group. Furthermore, descriptions and relevant minifilms have been created in the previous period to promote 'smart solutions' that we are meeting in Cyprus" (CY CAP SP, p.718-729).

Smart Villages in other EU funds and programmes

The **Recovery and Resilience Fund** is funding two projects directly connected to the implementation of Smart Villages approach. Through the Project "**Extension of a high speed network in remote areas**", by supporting the build-up of VHCN (such as fibre and 5G), in order to help the wider use and development of smart farming technologies and through the "**Smart City Platform**" Project, that it is uplevelled to Smart Cyprus Platform, which is going to collect and analyse all the data collected by smart solutions, or even it will be used to actually run specific smart solutions (smart waste / smart water management, smart parking, smart lighting).

Other funding schemes support projects that are connected with the Smart Villages approach, such as the support for investments **for electric vehicles charging points**, the support for promoting **renewable energy resources**, especially the use of solar panels and in upgrading / improving the public and private buildings energy category (moving to less consumption needs), or even supporting **investments for young people in rural areas**, evaluating with extra points any project taking place in rural and mountainous areas.

Ex-ante Evaluation

In the Ex-ante evaluation of the CAP SP of Cyprus there is a reference at part of the SWOT Analysis (Ex-ante evaluation: *"A horizontal observation and before the examination of the individual sections of the SWOT analysis, is the non-reference to the issues of broadband infrastructures and the degree of use - utilization of ICT in rural areas and the noted progress (if any) in the application of the principles of the bio-economy - circular economy. The issue of broadband infrastructure under the logic of the plan's intervention regulation on the content of the Strategic Plans of the CAP is part of promoting the SMART VILLAGE Strategy. The Evaluator proposes the enrichment of the analysis in the proposed section concerning the infrastructures"*). (CY CAP SP, p.85)

References are also included in the same section referring to the need of mentioning the Smart Villages Strategies in relation to the following points:

- *"The impossibility of utilizing e-government applications by residents of rural areas due to digital illiteracy.*
- *Technology development can act as a professional outlet for business activities.*
- *Non-coverage of all rural areas by broadband networks and non-quality provision of these services"* (CY CAP SP, p.95-07).

*The overall analysis and the references are based on the original **Cyprus CAP SP version 1.1 approved on 2/12/2022**. The Factsheet is produced under Contract No AGRI-2020-0332 with the Union and the opinions expressed are those of the contractor only and do not represent the contracting authority's official position.*